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FRENCH CANADIAN LITERATURE

BY

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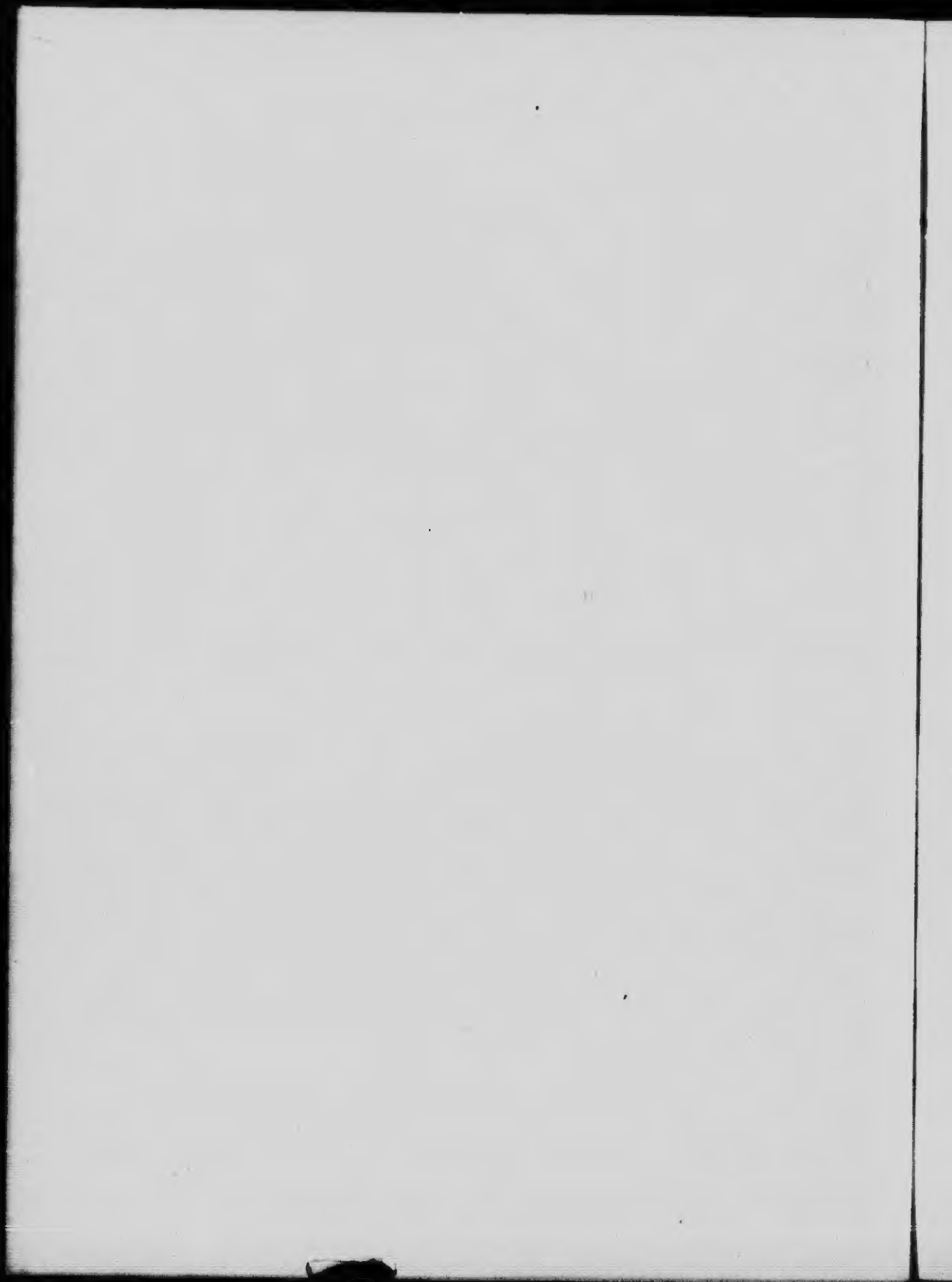
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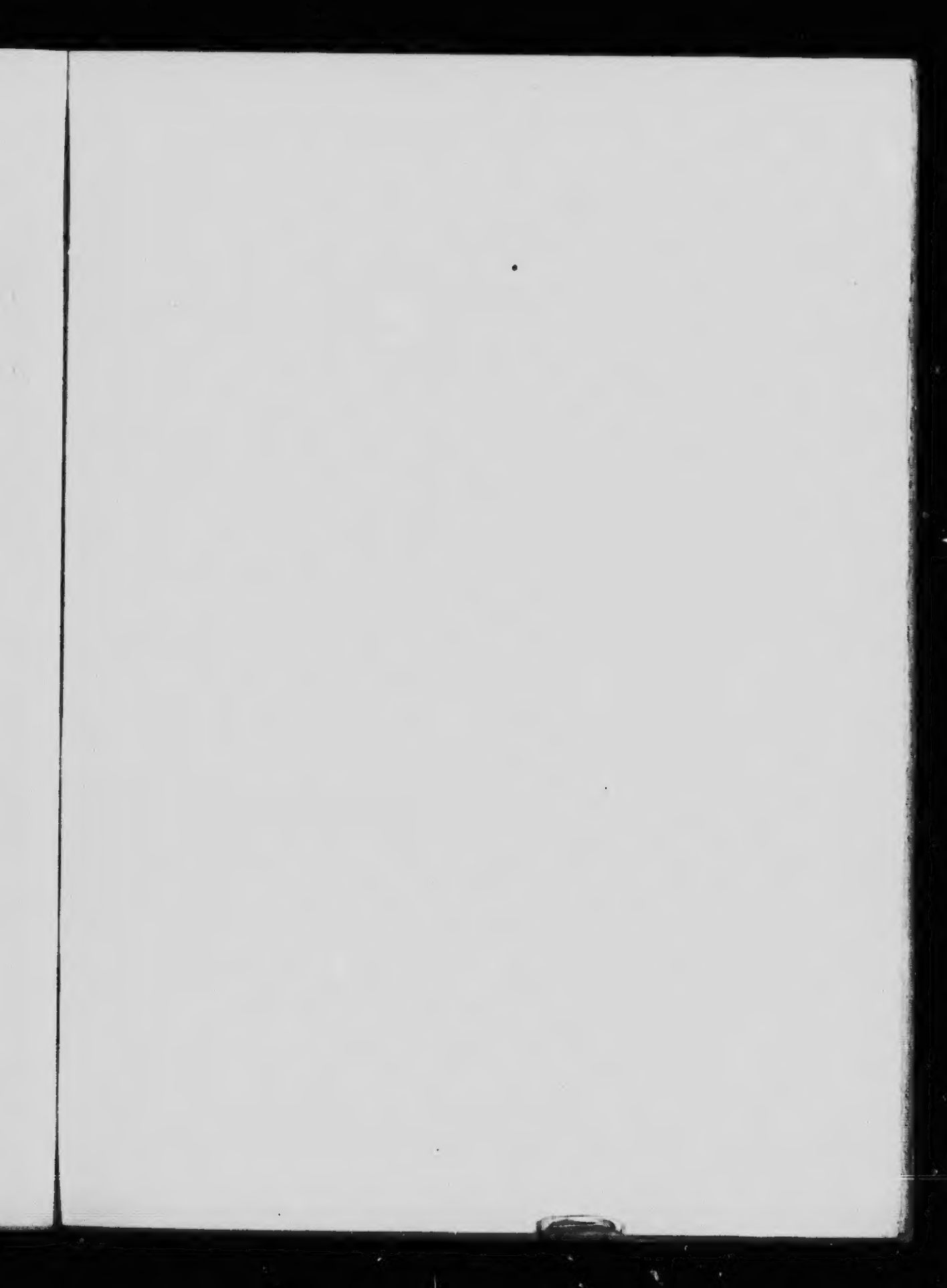


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A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE
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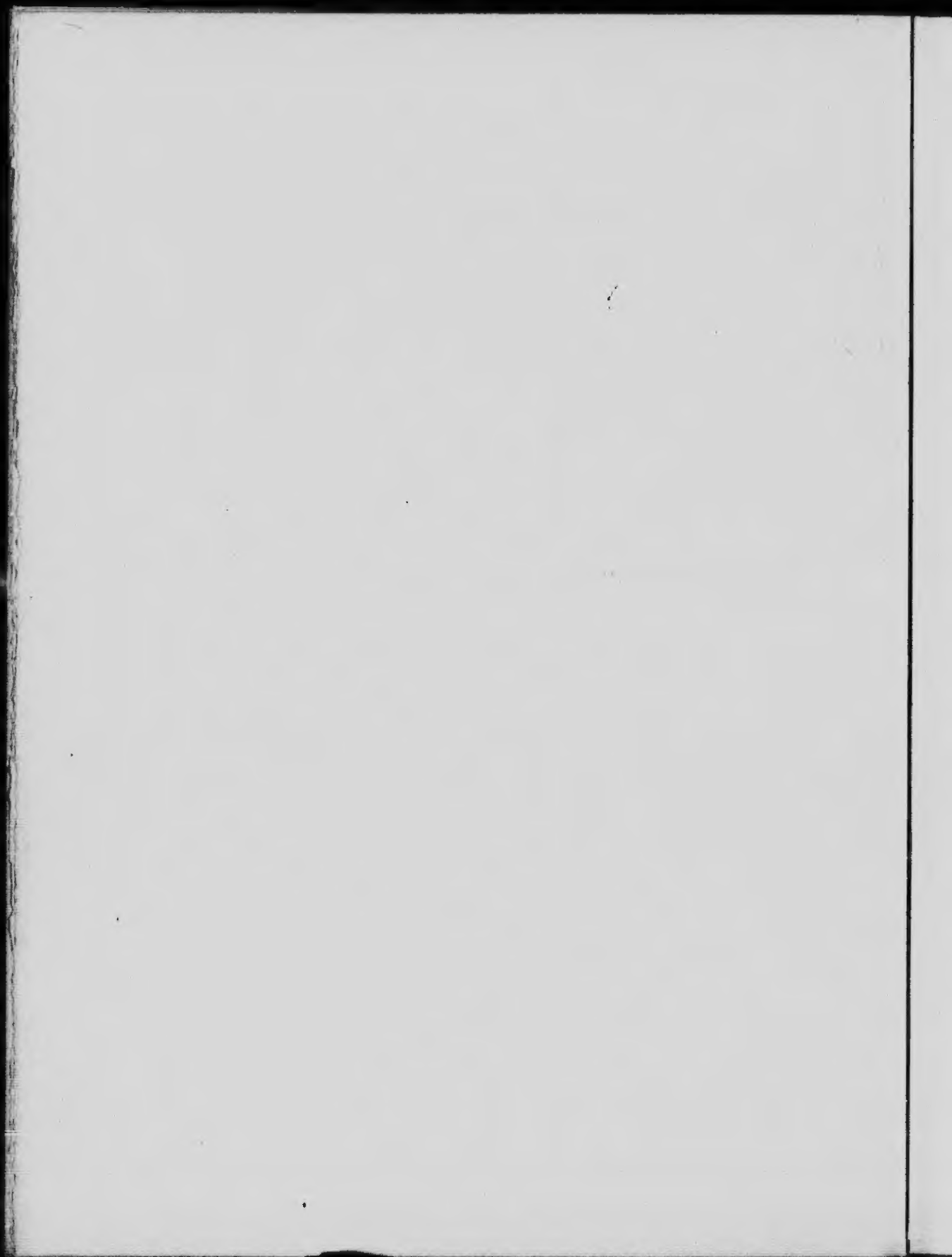
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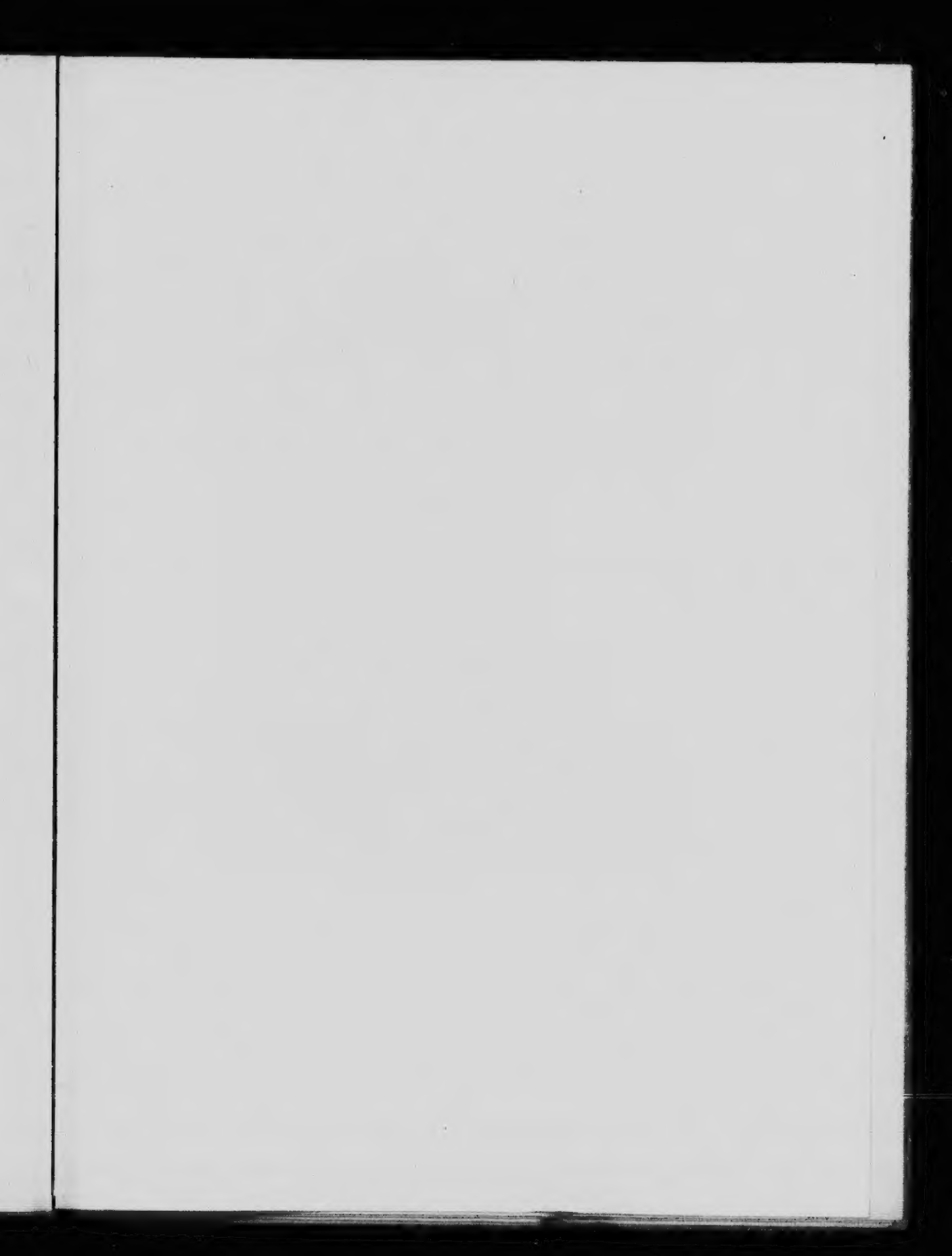






FRENCH-CANADIAN LITERATURE







ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE

FRANÇOIS XAVIER GARNEAU

From the painting by Albert Ferland

1411.

FRENCH-CANADIAN LITERATURE

BY
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PROFESSOR IN LAVAL UNIVERSITY
QUEBEC



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**This Volume consists of a Reprint, for
private circulation only, of the Seventieth
Signed Contribution contained in CANADA
AND ITS PROVINCES, a History of the
Canadian People and their Institutions by
One Hundred Associates.**

**Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty,
General Editors**

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FRENCH-CANADIAN LITERATURE

I

LITERARY ORIGINS, 1760-1840

THE literary history of the French Canadians may be said to date from the year 1760, or, if one prefers, from the cession of Canada to England. Before that time, indeed, there had been certain manifestations of literary life in New France: there had been accounts of travel, like those of Champlain; interesting narratives, like the *Relations* of the Jesuits; histories like that of Charlevoix; studies of manners like those of the Père Lafitau; and instructive letters, full of shrewd observations, like those of the Mère Marie de l'Incarnation. But these works were, for the most part, written in France, and all were published there. Their authors, moreover, belong to France much more than to Canada, and France, rather than Canada, is entitled to claim their works as her patrimony.

During the hundred and fifty years of French domination in Canada the colonists were unable to devote much attention to intellectual pursuits. All the living forces of the nascent people were engrossed by the ruder labours of colonization, commerce and war.

Nor was it even on the morrow of 1760—the morrow of the treaty that delivered New France to England—that the first books were printed and the first notable works written. There was other work to be done, and the French under their new rulers betook themselves to action. While repairing the disasters to their material fortunes, they numbered themselves, consolidated themselves, and set

themselves to preserve as intact as possible their ancient institutions and the traditions of their national life.

From this effort to preserve their nationality the first manifestations of their literary life were soon to spring; and it was through the newspaper—the most convenient vehicle of popular thought—that the French-Canadian mind first found expression. Only colonial literature could begin in the newspaper article. The older literatures were born on the lips of the sages, the bards or the troubadours; it was the human voice, the living song of a soul, that carried to attentive ears these first untutored accents. But in Canada, in America, where machinery is at the beginning of all progress, the Press is naturally the all-important instrument for the spread of literary ideas. In the years immediately following the Cession there were established in Quebec and Montreal several periodicals, in which the unpretentious works of the earliest writers may be found.

The following are some of the journals that appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, and that mark the true origin of French-Canadian literature:

La Gazette de Québec (1764); *La Gazette du Commerce et littéraire*, of Montreal, named almost immediately *La Gazette littéraire* (1778); *La Gazette de Montréal* (1785); *Le Magasin de Québec* (1792); *Le Cours du temps* (1794); *Le Canadien*, of Quebec (1806); *Le Courrier de Québec* (1807); *Le Vrai Canadien*, of Quebec (1810); *Le Spectateur*, of Montreal (1813); *L'Aurore*, of Montreal (1815); *L'Abeille canadienne*, of Montreal (1818).

These journals were not equally fortunate. Most of them—*La Gazette littéraire*, *L'Abeille canadienne*, *Le Magasin de Québec*, *Le Courrier de Québec*, *Le Vrai Canadien*—struggled for life for a few months or a few years, and disappeared one after the other. With the exception of *La Gazette de Québec*, *La Gazette de Montréal*, *Le Canadien*, and *Le Spectateur*, the first newspapers succumbed after a valiant struggle for existence. To reach the greatest possible number of readers, several of these journals—*La Gazette de Québec*, *L'A*

Gazette de Montréal, *Le Magasin de Québec* and *Le Cours du temps*—were written in both English and French.

The French newspapers may be divided into two distinct categories. There were those that were mainly political, or contained political news, like *La Gazette de Québec* and *La Gazette de Montréal*; and the periodicals that were distinctly literary, such as *La Gazette littéraire* of Montreal and *Le Magasin de Québec*. This last-named journal contained little but reproductions from foreign literature.

La Gazette littéraire of Montreal, published by Fleury Mesplet, on whose staff Valentin Jautard, a native of France, was an active collaborator under the pseudonym of 'Le Spectateur tranquille,' is noteworthy as having given the French Canadians their first opportunity of writing on literary and philosophical subjects. Much literary criticism, sometimes of a decidedly puerile nature, also appeared in it. In this paper, too, are encountered the first manifestations of the Voltairian spirit that had permeated many minds in Canada during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The first political journals were literary in but a small degree, and it was seldom that they published French articles of any value. Apart from a few occasional poems—of little merit, however—the French contents of *La Gazette de Québec* were, for the most part, merely translations of its English articles. The political literature of this journal is dull and unimportant. William Brown, who, with Thomas Gilmour, was its founder, characterized his journal only too well when he wrote (August 8, 1776) that it 'justly merited the title of the most innocent gazette in the British dominions.'

Nevertheless it was Quebec that became, in 1764, the cradle of Canadian journalism. Before the end of the French régime Quebec was already the centre of a civilization that was polished, elegant—refined even—and often very fashionable. Peter Kalm, the Swedish botanist—who visited New France in 1749, and left such a curious, instructive and faithful record of his journey—observed that Quebec then contained the elements of a distinguished society, in which

good taste was preserved, and in which the people delighted to make it govern their manners, their language and their dress. Quebec, moreover, prided herself not only on gathering within her walls the most important personages of the political and the ecclesiastical world, but also on being the chief seat of intellectual life in the new country. From Bougainville¹ we learn that in 1757, towards the end of the French régime, there was a literary club in Quebec. Besides this, the Jesuits' College and the Seminary had for more than a century drawn to Quebec the studious youth of the entire colony. Michel Bibaud, who visited the city in 1841, noted there 'the agreeable, affable manners of her leading citizens, and their French urbanity and courtesy.'² For this reason he called her 'the Paris of America.'

It was at Quebec, too, after 1791, when parliamentary government was accorded Lower Canada, that political oratory—timid at first, and modest in expression—was born. There the first groupings of intellectual forces were afterwards organized: the *Club constitutionnel* (1792); the *Société littéraire* (1809); the *Société historique et littéraire* (1824), founded at the Château Saint-Louis, under the presidency of Lord Dalhousie; and the *Société pour l'encouragement des Sciences et des Arts* (1827), which soon amalgamated, in 1829, with the *Société historique et littéraire*.

Montreal, in the nineteenth century, was not backward in seconding, propagating and developing those movements of intellectual life which were gathering force in Quebec. At Montreal people read both poetry and prose. Joseph Mermet, a French military poet, who came to Canada in 1813 and took part in the war then in progress, had a large number of admirers in the city. There Jacques Viger pursued his historical studies on Canada; and Denis Benjamin Viger, who at certain moments thought himself a poet, published his ponderous verses in *Le Spectateur*.

¹ Bougainville, Louis-Antoine, Comte de (1732-1811), came to Canada in 1756 as Montcalm's aide-de-camp. He kept a careful journal of the campaign ending with the surrender of Quebec. He returned to France and joined the navy. He made a voyage round the world (1766-69), and later fought with distinction against the British during the Revolutionary War.

² *Encyclopédie canadienne*, i. 309: 'Mon dernier voyage à Québec.'

In 1817 H. Bossange established in Montreal a fairly considerable bookselling business. The City Library is said to have contained eight thousand volumes in 1822.¹ The inhabitants might also nourish their intellectual curiosity in the newspapers and the literary miscellanies published about the middle of the nineteenth century, such as—*La Minerve* (1827), *L'Ami du Peuple* (1832), *Le Populaire* and *La Quotidienne* (1837), *L'Aurore des Canadas* (1839), and *Le Jean-Baptiste* (1840). To these may be added the miscellanies of Michel Bibaud—*La Bibliothèque canadienne* (1825 to 1830), *L'Observateur* (1830), *Le Magasin du Bas-Canada* (1832), and *L'Encyclopédie canadienne* (1842).

At this period Quebec and Montreal, with their associations, their journals and their literary miscellanies, were not as yet, of course, powerful centres of intellectual life, nor was the energy they radiated either very active or brilliant. In tracing the real origins of a literature, however, it is not unprofitable to indicate briefly the historical environment in which that literature was to have its birth. By this means the relative value of its earlier efforts is more justly appreciated.

With the French Canadians, song appears to have been the first form of poetry. Some verses written in 1757 and 1758² are still to be found; many may be read in the journals which made their appearance later. The popular song flew quickly from mouth to mouth when, in 1775, or again in 1812, the people were fired with a fine patriotic ardour to defend the soil of their invaded country. New Year's Day also supplied the rhymesters with matter for a few verses, mainly intended for newsboys' addresses. Needless to say, these poems—interesting as they are from the point of view of literary origins—have in themselves scarcely any literary value. The same may be said of many lyrical, pastoral and satirical pieces that appeared anonymously in the early journals.³

¹ *Histoire du Canada*, by Michel Bibaud, II. 403.

² *Le Foyer canadien*, 1865: article on 'Nos chansons historiques,' by Dr Hubert Larue, pp. 17-18.

³ On this subject see the author's work, *Nos Origines littéraires*, pp. 70-83 and 111-23, in which several extracts from these early poems are given.

At this period, however, two poets stand out from all others—Joseph Quesnel and Joseph Mermet. Although they were of French origin, they so deeply impressed Canadians of their time, and exercised such an influence upon later writers of verse and men of letters, that we cannot but take account of them in a history of the beginnings of French-Canadian poetry.

Quesnel was born at St Malo in 1749, and died at Montreal in 1809. He came to Canada from France in 1779. He was a village merchant at Boucherville, and afterwards lived in Montreal. He employed much of his leisure in writing verses and music. His principal work consists of a large number of poems, epistles, hymns, epigrams and songs. He also left a dialogue in verse, *Le Rimeur dépité*; a comedy in verse, *L'Anglomanie*; and two prose comedies—*Colas et Colinette*, the text of which is embellished with ariettas, and *Les Républicains français*.

Quesnel's poetry was for the most part light and playful. His muse never tires of pleasantry, in which he often indulges with delicacy and grace. To fine badinage he readily adds a piquant irony. In his epistle to M. Génereux Labadie he pokes fun playfully both at the public, for not sufficiently encouraging literature, and at Labadie himself. *Le Rimeur dépité* is another example of this raillery, at once light and biting. In these two pieces, however, there is a lack of care in regard to form and of scholarly dignity.

Quesnel concerns himself more with the quality of his verse and the trueness of its tone when he writes idyllic poetry and sings of nature. He had a keen appreciation of that beauty of nature which the descriptive poets of the eighteenth century made popular. He was probably the first French-Canadian poet to sing in praise of running brooks and blossoming flowers.

Quesnel's two most important works, however, are *Colas et Colinette*, the text of which is preserved in *Le Répertoire national*, and *l'Anglomanie*, a little comedy in verse which has not been published, but has been included by Jacques Viger in his *Saberdache*.

Colas et Colinette is a comedy, and is French rather than

Canadian. Traces of the customs of Canada are rare. Apart from certain psychological observations on love, which may be applicable to any country, the piece has little interest except as a picture of popular manners in provincial France. The old and gallant *bailli*, who wishes to rob the rude, rustic Colas of his delicate and graceful Colinette, resembles a Canadian magistrate but distantly; while Colas himself, with his strange and faulty speech, in no way represents a young peasant of Lower Canada.

Quesnel's *L'Anglomanie*, or *Le Dîner à l'anglaise*, is frankly Canadian in inspiration. The subject was suggested by a caprice that affected the upper ranks of French-Canadian society about the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time certain families allowed themselves to be too easily fascinated by English fashions and customs. They abandoned the old French domestic traditions, in order to adopt the habits of their British compatriots. *L'Anglomanie* is not, of course, a powerful work, but it is nevertheless interesting. It is to be hoped that it may yet be printed and submitted to the curiosity of the public. Quesnel's light comedies and his copious poetic output led his contemporaries to regard him as the model of elegant and witty versifiers.

A few years after Quesnel's death another French poet arrived in Canada, and in turn succeeded in getting his work read and admired—sometimes with a too generous admiration. This was Joseph Mermet, lieutenant and adjutant of de Watteville's regiment. Mermet came to Canada in 1813 with his regiment, composed mainly of Swiss soldiers and officers. Watteville's regiment took a prominent part in the War of 1812-14. It was sent to Kingston, and in that town the poet-lieutenant employed his leisure in writing verse. There he made the acquaintance of Jacques Viger, and the two became friends. It was Viger who made the poet's work known to his friends in Montreal, and got his poems published in *Le Spectateur*.

In these poems Mermet sang of war—the war that American cupidity had just brought close to Canadian homes, and that had summoned the brave militia beneath

the colours. Several of his pieces owed their success chiefly to the actuality of the subject treated rather than to their artistic merit—for example, the lyrical verses in which he essayed to sing the victory of Châteauguay.

The hymn of the 'Victory of Châteauguay' secured its author the friendship of the hero of that day. De Salaberry, wishing to meet the poet who had extolled his military deeds, invited him to his table. The soldier-poet went to Chambly; he passed a few hours in the colonel's retreat there, and on returning from the visit wrote his poem on 'Chambly.'

During his travels on Canadian soil Mermet could not but admire the magnificent spectacles presented by nature. He is, we believe, the first Canadian poet to sing of Niagara; he set himself to describe it, and his lines possess the special merit of precision.

It is not, however, in Mermet's poems of patriotism and war, nor even in his descriptive poetry, that the author's best and most characteristic spirit is to be found. The adjutant of de Watteville's regiment loved raillery above everything. This French soldier is merry. He loses no opportunity of throwing off a humorous couplet or of distributing impromptu rhymes among his friends. To him everything is matter for amusing or satirical verse. In the *Saberdache* of Jacques Viger many of these light and often carelessly written poems may still be found; although of little value, they were received enthusiastically by the readers of 1813.

Mermet returned to France in 1816. In Canada, therefore, he was merely a visitor. Nevertheless it is plain, from certain literary discussion in which he took part in *Le Spectateur*,¹ that his influence upon the poets of his time was considerable.

Mermet has given us several examples of that sprightly, bantering literature so long practised by Quésnel. He is not, of course, a great poet; he did not even take pains to be a second-rate poet. Yet he stimulated the ambition of those who at the beginning of the nineteenth century were endeavouring to make the new-born literature of Canada lisp in nuribers.

¹ *Le Spectateur*, September 16 and 23, and October 21, 1813.

In Queauel and Mermet we see the expression of the French muse, which has become Canadian for a brief period. In their poems, too, we see a reflection—dim though it be—of those light, graceful and terse forms of poetry, frequently idyllic, that flourished in France during the eighteenth century.

While these poets were still making their influence felt at Quebec and Montreal, a Canadian poet—Canadian by birth— essayed to capture public attention. This was Michel Bibaud, who was born near Montreal, at the Côte des Neiges, in 1782, and died at Montreal in 1857. To Bibaud must be accorded the honour—if honour it be—of publishing the first miscellany of poems in the history of French-Canadian literature. This collection, which appeared in 1830, is entitled *Épîtres, Satires, Chansons, Épigrammes, et autres pièces en vers*. It is composed of pieces that had appeared several years previously, the first satire dating from 1817. It contains no poems that are really good. It was seldom given to Bibaud himself to be a poet; and the pieces he published are more interesting from the point of view of the history of manners and ideas than from that of art, which in him is usually commonplace.

Michel Bibaud and Denis Benjamin Viger, who contributed to *Le Spectateur*, were the representatives of French-Canadian poetry at the moment when it was venturing on its first flights. It is true these men were not great poets, but we must be thankful to those who, at the beginning of a country's history, venture to do something, and who, at the cost of their own failure, point the way to others who may yet follow and excel them.

The most important chapter of French-Canadian literary origins—dull though it often is—is composed of the prose matter in the early newspapers. Among the first to write for the journals and to influence the public mind in their diverse degrees were—Pierre Bédard and François Blanchet in *Le Canadien*; Jacques Labrie and Louis Plamondon in *Le Courrier de Québec*; Denis Benjamin Viger in *Le Canadien* and *Le Spectateur*; Michel Bibaud in *L'Aurore des Canadas* and later in his collected works; and Jacques Viger in *Le*

Canadien and in the literary journals and miscellanies of Michel Bibaud. After these came Étienne Parent, who, by virtue of his forceful thought and the vigour of his articles, merits a place apart.

This newspaper prose was almost the only literary matter printed at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century; it was also the only literature, or nearly so, that expressed Canadian thought. It was this literature that engaged the attention of the citizens, directed their political sympathies, and often moulded their judgment on public affairs. This prose is by turn passionate and calm, fiery and restrained, aggressive and patient. It is full of those agitations that at certain periods troubled the national life—when, for example, Craig was the dupe of the evil counsellors who surrounded him, and the French Canadians were at once irascible and bold in their demands. Throughout this political literature are to be found the deep traces of those increasing recriminations excited during nearly forty years by topics that so often irritated, such as supplies and the reform of the legislative council.

The political oratory of the first parliaments had naturally much of the qualities and defects of the journalism. Usually we find the same men speaking from the political platform and writing in the journals. Their style varies greatly: it is generally temperate, terse and precise; but frequently it is confused, ponderous and solemn. The oratory, like the written prose of the time, was substantial rather than artistic, vigorous rather than pliant, firm rather than passionate. The name of Louis Joseph Papineau stands out among all those who earned applause as political orators during the first half of the nineteenth century. Papineau's name is still popular among French Canadians, for he long embodied the highest aspirations of his countrymen. This is not the place to discuss the excesses into which he was sometimes led by his ardent patriotism. It is well worth remembering that, more than any other in his day, he was an orator and a political tribune. He knew and could use those expressions that strike the imagination of a people. From the platform, where he himself fought

like a soldier, he impetuously sounded the charge, at once restraining and inflaming popular passions.

While Papineau was making speeches, a journalist was writing articles in which the very soul of the French-Canadian people was expressed with an eloquence by turns commanding, ironical, rugged and light. It may be said that Étienne Parent portrayed the most intimate thoughts of the people for a longer time than Papineau, and more faithfully. In Parent, indeed, we encounter the man who, during the period of the literary origins of French Canada, was the most sagacious of the politicians and the greatest of the writers.

Parent was born at Beauport, near Quebec, on May 2, 1802. On the completion of his classical studies at the College of Nicolet and the Seminary of Quebec, he entered the profession of journalism. In 1822 he became editor of *Le Canadien* in Quebec. After the temporary cessation of this journal in 1825, the young editor pursued his law studies, and was admitted to the bar in 1829. He was unable to devote himself long to the practice of law. His literary temperament, his well-stored mind, his desire to discuss ideas, and his taste for controversy drew him once more to journalism. In 1831 a group of young deputies demanded the establishment of a fighting journal, and suggested the revival of *Le Canadien*, whose very name was a watchword. Parent undertook the task of resurrecting it, and on May 7, 1831, the initial number appeared. On the first page a new device was inscribed: 'Our Institutions, our Language and our Laws!'

In Montreal, at that time, *La Minerve*—a very violent patriotic organ—was read. At Quebec, it was *Le Canadien* that undertook to scatter the seed of those political truths with which it was desired to imbue all minds.

The office of *Le Canadien*, in which Parent reigned, became a sort of centre where politicians gathered, and where the plans of attack and defence of the parliamentarians were arranged. Parent retained the conduct of his journal until 1842. In the preceding year he had been elected member for the county of Saguenay. In consequence of serious deafness, contracted in the state prisons in which he

was confined with so many other patriots during the winter of 1837-38, he considered it necessary in 1842 to resign his seat. He accepted the post of clerk of the executive council. He ceased to direct *Le Canadien*, therefore, in the same year. He reappeared frequently, however, and still conducted lively controversies, in its columns.

From 1842 it was chiefly by means of lecturing that Parent sought to continue among his countrymen the educative ministry to which his journalistic activity had accustomed him. To the members of the Canadian Institute of Montreal and Quebec, at the reading-room of Saint-Roch, Quebec, and before the Society for the Early Closing of Shops, Quebec, he delivered courses of public lectures that testify to the extent of his knowledge, and especially to the philosophic penetration of his mind. He became under-secretary for the Province of Lower Canada in 1847, and retained substantially the same functions under Confederation, with the title of under-secretary of state. He retired from office in 1872, and died at Ottawa on December 22, 1874. On the day of his death *Le Courrier de l'Outaouais* declared that Parent 'created the journalistic style of this country.' This eulogy suggests the high and authoritative place that the editor of *Le Canadien* had won. By his brother journalists he was called 'the Nestor of the Press,' as a tribute to the prudence he generally exercised in his writings.

Moreover, Parent the journalist was more than any other of his contemporaries a courageous and clear-sighted patriot. A master-thought directed all his ideas. 'A pole-star led me,' he used to say in his later years.¹ This star—the guide of his spirit—was the motto which he inscribed at the head of *Le Canadien*: 'Our Institutions, our Language and our Laws!' Whatever had no concern with this patriotic programme was banished from the journal's columns. Parent had well-defined political principles, and it was upon these principles that he founded his journalistic activity, and sought to achieve the liberty of his compatriots. What were the principles he professed? Upon what rights did he wish to base the stability and progress of the nation?

¹ Words quoted by Benjamin Sulte, in *La Minerve*, December 23, 1874.

He considered, in the first place, that in a country endowed with a parliamentary system the House of Assembly ought to have a certain and decisive influence upon the policy of the government. He could not conceive this influence being sufficient without the absolute control of supplies. This famous question of supplies, it will be remembered, was, in both Upper and Lower Canada, for more than thirty years the cause of the most violent public controversies. Parent combined this principle of the control of supplies by the assembly with the higher principle of the responsibility of the executive. The latter, he held, ought to be responsible to the people or to their deputies. It is especially interesting to note with what precision the editor of *Le Canadien*, in 1833, demands this responsible government :

We now ask that the Executive Council be assimilated to the cabinet in England. . . . Thus, instead of influential members of one Chamber or the other being summoned and made mere political councillors, we now desire that they be made heads of departments, severally and jointly responsible to the Chambers.¹

It was to secure a more complete application of this governmental responsibility that Parent, and all the patriots of his day, conducted their agitation against the legislative council, then composed of members nominated by the crown. In place of irresponsible councillors he demanded elective councillors. He regarded the constitution of the legislative council, as defined by the constitution, as a great error on the part of Pitt. 'The minister,' he declared, 'ought to have seen that he was bringing into the lists against the people a class of men who could never have anything in common with them, since the former ran necessarily towards liberty, and the latter towards absolute power and privilege.'²

In the exposition and defence of his political principles Parent always displayed a calm and appropriate moderation. He was never a lover of excess, either in words or deeds.

¹ *Le Canadien*, June 19, 1833.

² *Ibid.*, May 1, 1833.

Although he long fought by Papineau's side, and was long one of 'the sullen guard of the agitators'—in the phrase of that day—he was unable to follow the leader of the patriots to the end. He broke away when it seemed to him that Papineau was about to abandon the paths of prudence and legality.

In his study of social questions, no less than in politics, Parent displayed the lucidity and penetration of his intellect. Both by taste and by virtue of his remarkable mental qualities he was a philosopher. His contemporaries did not hesitate to call him 'the Victor Cousin of Canada,' at a time when Cousin was exercising in France a very great influence on philosophic thought.

In his lectures Parent set himself to popularize those philosophical and social ideas, inspired by Christianity, towards which his sympathies and intellect naturally drew him. In order to present some idea of the wide range of his studies, it will suffice to cite the subjects of the speeches or lectures delivered by him in Montreal and Quebec. At the Institut Canadien, Montreal, he gave the following lectures: 'Industry as a Means of Preserving our Nationality' (January 22, 1846); 'The Importance of the Study of Political Economy' (November 19, 1846); 'Human Labour' (September 23, 1847); 'The Priest and Spirituality in their Relation to Society' (December 17, 1848); and 'Considerations on our System of Popular Education, on Education in general, and the Legislative Means of providing for it' (February 19, 1848). At the Institut Canadien of Quebec he delivered two lectures on 'Intelligence in its Relations to Society' (January 22 and February 7, 1852); before the Society for the Early Closing of Shops, Quebec, he spoke on 'The Importance of Commerce and its Duties' (January 15, 1852); and at the reading-room of Saint-Roch, Quebec, he lectured to an audience of working-men on 'The Condition of the Working Classes' (April 15, 1852). This last lecture puts very happily, from a Christian standpoint, the necessary social conditions of labour, and formulates the principles that ought to regulate the relations of masters and men.

At this conference Parent thus exhorted his hearers to make Catholic doctrine the rule of all economic progress :

Ouvriers, mes amis, pour qui je parle, vous qui êtes les abeilles travailleuses de la ruche sociale, voulez-vous éviter les maux dont souffrent vos semblables ailleurs, tenez fort et ferme à votre système catholique, et à tout ce qui en fait l'essence. Repoussez les adeptes du jugement privé, qui cherchent à vous en éloigner. Le catholicisme, voyez-vous, c'est l'association dans sa plus haute et sa plus vaste expression, et cela au profit du pauvre et du faible, qui ne peuvent être forts que par l'association. Celle-ci en les réunissant en un faisceau saura les rendre plus forts que les forts. Je ne nierai pas que, humainement parlant, le principe du jugement privé, qui est, en pratique, l'individualisme appliqué aux choses morales, ne tende à augmenter la force des individualités ; mais cela ne peut profiter qu'au petit nombre d'individus fortement trempés. L'individualisme est comme le vent qui anime un brasier, mais qui éteint une chandelle. Aux masses il faut l'association d'idées, l'unité, et par conséquent l'autorité. Je prie ceux de mes jeunes auditeurs qui seraient, comme on l'est trop souvent à leur âge, enclins à se révolter contre toute espèce d'autorité, de bien réfléchir là-dessus, avant de jeter le doute et le trouble dans l'esprit du peuple, à l'endroit de ses anciennes institutions. Les anciennes institutions d'un pays, ses croyances religieuses surtout, il ne faut jamais l'oublier, sont à un peuple ce que sont à un individu sa constitution physique, ses habitudes, sa manière de vivre : en un mot, c'est sa vie propre. Et dire qu'il se trouve des hommes, de soi-disant patriotes, prêts à faire main-basse sur tout cela, sous le prétexte de réforme et de progrès ! Les malheureux ! ils ne voient pas que c'est la destruction et la mort. Réformons, mais ne détruisons pas : avançons, mais sans lâcher le fil conducteur de la tradition.

In these lectures, as in his articles in *Le Canadien*, Mr y be seen the impressive, forceful and clear language of which he was master. True, it has not always the freedom and grace that might be wished ; but it is often coloured by vivid and striking images that fix the idea in bold relief. It readily becomes ironical, incisive and caustic. In *Le Canadien*

there are articles, directed against the *Montreal Herald*, the *Mercury*, and even *L'Ami du Peuple*, that are little masterpieces of invective and sound sense.

Parent's contemporaries did not fail to recognize his high intellectual value and his practised taste as a man of letters. He was often consulted, and his judgments were highly esteemed. He was not only a political leader, but also the literary leader of his time. He loved to welcome, encourage and stimulate talent; and, as Hector Fabre said in those days, 'no one dared to think himself a writer unless he had his patent from Parent's hands.'

It would be impossible, then, to accord this father of French-Canadian literature too large a place in the history of its origins. His is incontestably the finest, most worthy and most expressive figure of that time. While Parent belongs to the origins of the literature, he is also a prophet of the following period—that of more fruitful growth; he even merits a place beside the most illustrious in any period of the literary history of French Canada, for he is still recognized in the Dominion as one of the highest representatives of French thought and culture.

While Parent held the public mind by his journalism and lectures, another writer—at first by journalism and later by literature—was seeking to attract attention. This was Michel Bibaud, whose heavy and dull poems have been mentioned; but he succeeded better in prose than in verse. Public sympathy, however, was meted out to him but sparingly. We have already recalled the literary miscellanies that he successively edited between 1825 and 1842. Here must be mentioned the *Histoire du Canada*, which at first appeared fragmentarily in these miscellanies, and was afterwards published in three volumes, the first of which was given to the public in 1837, the second in 1844 and the third—long after the author's death—in 1878.

This *Histoire du Canada* comprises the whole course of the political life of the country from its first settlement until 1837. It had not the good fortune to please French-Canadian readers, and this explains the silence with which the work was received. Bibaud was not one of the patriotic

school. He did not agree with such men as Papineau, Morin, Viger and Parent; in politics he held aloof from his French-Canadian fellow-citizens. He rather sided with those who at that time approved the conduct of the English functionaries, governors or councillors—collectively termed 'bureaucrats.' Bibaud, a bureaucrat, wrote the history of Canada from the point of view of a friend of the administration: on nearly every page of his narrative he censured the attitude and conduct of the patriots. He reproached them especially with their irreconcilability, complacently set forth certain errors in their tactics, and devoted himself, for the most part, to defending the policy of the oligarchy by which Lower Canada was governed. It will be readily understood that such a history could not be acceptable to the public. Although it occasionally contains judicious observations, it is evident that the work is written with prejudice. It was, therefore, condemned to failure at the outset.

The matter, especially in the second and third parts, is not well assimilated, or presented with sufficient skill. Bibaud is too often content merely to pile documents and official papers on the top of each other. Frequently confusion and obscurity are the result. The narrative might well have been freer, more spirited, and more precise.

II

LITERARY DEVELOPMENT, 1840-1912

HISTORY

SHORTLY after the publication of Michel Bibaud's *Histoire du Canada*, another work appeared which was at once to eclipse it and cause it to be forgotten—the *Histoire du Canada* (1845-48) by François Xavier Garneau. With this work the second period of French-Canadian literature opens—the period of its development. This book was soon to be followed by others, not less important, which were to make the years following

1840 a remarkable epoch from the point of view of progress in Canadian letters.

The conditions of the political life of the country were such as to bring about this literary growth. The struggles which the French Canadians had to maintain for the defence of their legitimate liberties, the bloody issue of that long agitation, the designs of diplomatic repression which the Act of Union of 1840 sufficiently disclosed—gave them to understand that they must more than ever concern themselves with strengthening their separate and distinctive public life. As nothing expresses better, or stimulates more effectually, the forces of national consciousness than literature—history, poetry, oratory, books and publications of every kind—several minds determined to devote themselves to the development of French-Canadian letters. Men felt a need to write the history of their past, the better to illumine the future; to sing the ancient glories in order to inspire new courage; to relate the old and venerable traditions, that their memory might be imprinted ineffaceably on the hearts of the young. François Xavier Garneau appears first on the list of those who then made the literature of French Canada shine with a fresh brilliance. National history has for him a distinct claim on the Canadian conscience.

Born at Quebec in 1809, Garneau belonged to a respectable artisan family, industrious but not well-to-do. His people were unable to give him the education he would have liked. He attended the day-schools of Quebec, but he was unable to enter the Petit Séminaire for his classical course. Entering the office of Archibald Campbell, notary, at the age of sixteen, young Garneau began his apprenticeship, studying Latin and French classical authors by himself in his spare time. It was while thus engaged that his vocation as historian was revealed to him. It was then, at least, that, moved by a natural feeling of irritation, he one day conceived the project of writing his history of Canada. There were some young English clerks in Campbell's office; and, as the rivalries of race were at that time warm, arguments frequently arose on questions of Canadian history. The young patriot's opponents did not scruple

to offend his pride. After all, was he not but a son of the vanquished, and did not every one know that the French Canadians had no history? One day, driven beyond all bounds by some such insult, young Garneau retorted: 'Our history! Very well—I will tell it! And you will see how our ancestors were vanquished, and whether such a defeat was not as glorious as victory!' The work that Garneau wished to write demanded much labour and preparation. Unexpected circumstances occurred, however, to enable him to qualify himself gradually for the task.

Garneau became a notary in 1830. He employed his leisure in collecting historical notes on Canada; and soon, on June 20, 1831, by dint of stringent saving, he was enabled to go to England. There he applied himself to the study of English institutions, and attended the sittings of parliament. After a short visit to France he returned to London, and had the good fortune to become secretary to Denis Benjamin Viger, who was then diplomatic agent for the French Canadians to the English government. The young secretary spent two years in London. He had an opportunity of meeting some of the great men in the English and French world of letters; he learned at what cost the literary glories of Europe had been built up, and he was astonished at the influence and prestige accorded to intellectual authority in the enlightened Old World centres of culture. Returning to Quebec on June 30, 1833, Garneau endeavoured—but only for a short time—to pursue his profession as a notary. He then became an accountant in a bank, and was at length appointed translator to the legislative assembly of Lower Canada. It was in an official position that he was to find the time necessary for carrying into effect his project for a history of Canada.

The first volume appeared in 1845, the second in 1846 and the third in 1848. These volumes brought events down only to 1792. In 1852 the author published a second edition, in which the narrative reached the year 1840. In 1855 Garneau published his *Voyage en Angleterre et en France*. But already a serious malady, epilepsy, was gradually undermining his health. Since 1844 he had been secretary of the

city of Quebec; he was obliged to resign in 1864, when his malady attacked him in a more violent form. He died at Quebec in 1866. The ashes of the 'national historian' of French Canada rest in the Belmont cemetery, at the gates of the city, near the battlefield of Ste Foy, the glory of which he has so eloquently told.

Garneau's *Histoire du Canada* gives the story of all the French colonies of North America from their origin to the treaty of 1763. From that date the author confines his narrative to Canada proper. The sustained effort necessary to the construction of a work so extensive and so fine cannot be overestimated. Garneau wrote at a time when it was very difficult to get access to the sources of the history of Canada. Obviously, his documentation could not be so abundant as that of later historians. But he set himself to turn to account all the materials and historical information he was able to collect. Out of these materials, hitherto rare, he made a work that, although incomplete and capable of improvement in many respects, excited the admiration of his contemporaries by its general excellence. Written during the political turmoil that came to a head in 1837, and published on the morrow of the insurrection and the establishment of the unacceptable union of the two Canadas, Garneau's work is plainly a work of defence and of attack. Yet the spirit of moderation by which it is animated deserves praise. Some of his contemporaries even reproached him for not having written panegyrics on the French Canadians. Garneau preferred, while honourably acquitting his compatriots in respect of certain historic accusations made against them, to indicate also the political errors into which they fell.

One of the most important sections of the *Histoire du Canada*, and one awaited with the greatest curiosity and impatience, was that devoted to the account of the conquest of Canada by England. Garneau had himself suffered from the accusations sometimes lightly cast at the conquered Canadians. Happily, and very justly, he brought out the value of such a conquest, and opportunely rectified the military history of those painful years.

Garneau's chief aim was to write the political history of his country. Educated in the school of Augustin Thierry and Guizot, he took delight in philosophical speculations; he loved to trace the principles governing historical development, and his work clearly bears the mark of his intellectual sympathies. His history is not merely dramatic by reason of the stirring recitals it contains; it is also a work of philosophy.

Unfortunately, the philosophy of Garneau is not always very safe. Not having followed the lessons of the masters, and having acquired his ideas on government in the course of studies that were often ill-chosen, he sometimes allowed theories derived from French liberalism to find their way into his work—for example, the principle of the absolute freedom of conscience, for which he has been so keenly reproached. Garneau, moreover, did not sufficiently appreciate the part played in Canadian history by the Catholic Church or the clergy. He did not see with sufficient clearness the very special conditions under which the church's intervention in the political life of the colony took place. Nor did he sufficiently know or understand the efforts made by the clergy for the instruction of the people. These errors of the historian prevent his work from being as perfect as it might otherwise have been. If, however, we forget these defects and remember only the work as a whole, we are obliged to acknowledge that such a monument could have been conceived and executed only by a great mind. 6

The literary style, moreover, heightens the interest. Garneau's phraseology is free, ample and eloquent. On occasion it is warm and vibrating. If it is hampered at times by heaviness, it is incontestably capable of grace and vivacity. The study of the *Histoire du Canada* produced the greatest enthusiasm in the middle of the nineteenth century. The young especially were stirred as they turned the pages in which they felt the soul of their country throb. Garneau founded a school. Under his inspiration the historians and poets of the ensuing years worked.

Garneau was still alive when another historian essayed to rival him in public favour—the Abbé Jean Baptiste

Antoine Ferland, who was born at Montreal in 1805. A diligent student at the Collège de Nicolet, and gifted with the most varied talents, he became in turn professor at Nicolet, vicar, curé, and finally, in 1850, a member of the archiepiscopal staff in Quebec. He devoted his later years to the study of Canadian history, and from 1856 to 1862 delivered at Laval University lectures which were well attended. These university lectures he began to publish in 1861. He was able to issue only one volume; the second was published by his friends. Illness and death prevented the continuation of his work. He died at Quebec in 1865.

Ferland's *Cours d'Histoire du Canada* comprises only the years of the French domination, and it is to be regretted that the author was unable to carry his work further. He possessed, indeed, the best qualities of the historian. He is specially distinguished by the most scrupulous scientific method; he was a tireless seeker for truth. He visited the archives of London and Paris to consult documents at first hand. The sole object of his stay in Europe, during the years 1856 and 1857, was to obtain materials for his history from original sources. In his work he did not sufficiently indicate his references to authentic documents, but he rarely wrote without basing his information on such documents. Thus he was able to rectify a great many dates which, before his history appeared, were uncertain, and to throw a fresh light upon incidents that had not always been properly judged. He understood better than Garneau the religious nature of the historical origins of Canada, and rendered greater justice in this regard to those who were their principal creators.

Ferland carefully examined the details of the life and manners of New France. He also made a very full study of the character and the curious customs of the Indians. He took special pains in his narration of the circumstances attending the establishment of the colony, and the first developments of its national life. After a preface dealing with the early inhabitants of America, and the explorers who were the first to touch the American coast, he addresses

himself to the subject of his laborious study, and lays bare, with the most ample and interesting details, the foundations of Canadian history.

Ferland has not the brilliant literary enthusiasm of Garneau. He aims less at the development of general considerations, he has a better grasp of vital details, and he gets into his book more historical matter. The language he writes is thoroughly French, and is precise, clear and spirited, its one ornament being a fine and frank simplicity.

Certain of Ferland's smaller works and articles are of the greatest interest and deserve mention: *Journal d'un Voyage sur les Côtes de la Gaspésie*, Louis-Olivier Gamache, *Le Labrador*, and *Notice biographique sur Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis*. These studies appeared in *Le Foyer canadien* between 1861 and 1863.

Contemporary with Ferland was Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, one of his admirers, who also wrote a considerable chapter of Canadian history. He was born at Yamachiche in 1824, and died at Ottawa in 1882. He was long known chiefly by his novel of colonization, *Jean Rivard*. But in 1888 a valuable work which he had left in manuscript, *Dix ans d'Histoire du Canada, 1840-50*, was published. This work is the best study we have of the period that witnessed the establishment of responsible government. The information is abundant and accurate. Possibly official documents are inserted too copiously in the text, and too frequently impede the course of the narrative. The style is temperate and easy. Although not an artist capable of making his figures stand out boldly, Gérin-Lajoie produced a work that may be read with great interest and profit.

The Abbé Henri Raymond Casgrain, who was born at Rivière-Ouelle in 1831 and died at Quebec in 1904, devoted his entire life to the study of his country's past. He was a most prolific and enthusiastic historian. With Gérin-Lajoie, Joseph Charles Taché and Dr Hubert Larue, he played a large part in the renaissance of French-Canadian letters that followed the year 1860. With them he founded *Les Soirées canadiennes* in 1861, and *Le Foyer canadien* in 1863. The works of Garneau and Ferland had excited his

ardent interest, and it was his ambition to continue and complete their task.

In 1860 he began by publishing his *Légendes*, in which he set himself to revive Canadian customs. He then entered upon serious history, and wrote successively—*Histoire de la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation* (1864); *Biographies canadiennes*, which were collected in one volume; *Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec* (1878); *Pèlerinage au Pays d'Évangéline* (1885); *Montcalm et Lévis* (1891); *Une Seconde Acadie* (1894); *Asile du Bon Pasteur de Québec* (1896); and *Les Sulpiciens et les Prêtres des Missions Étrangères en Acadie* (1897). The work of Casgrain is therefore considerable. It gives evidence of great activity. Yet his eyes had been strained by overstudy, and he had to have recourse to a secretary to aid him in his search for and study of documents. His learning was great, and his books are full of information of the most varied nature. It is generally agreed, however, that he possessed an imagination and sensitiveness which at times injured the accuracy of his narrative and the justness of his judgment. He liked to find in history what he sought. Yet his books are imbued with warmth and life. The language is free and vivid, although sometimes rather overloaded with imagery—especially in his earlier works. It was, indeed, by his literary art that he captivated his readers. Casgrain's works have helped greatly in making Canada known abroad, especially in France.

In the first of his *Légendes*, *le Tableau de la Rivière-Ouelle*, Abbé Casgrain thus faithfully described in a most picturesque manner the home of the French-Canadian habitant :

Voyez-vous là-bas, sur le versant de ce coteau, cette jolie maison qui se dessine, blanche et propre, avec sa grange couverte de chaume, sur la verdure tendre et chatoyante de cette belle érablière. C'est une maison canadienne.

Du haut de son piédestal de gazon, elle sourit au grand fleuve, dont la vague, où frémit sa tremblante image, vient expirer à ses pieds. Car, l'heureux propriétaire de cette demeure aime son beau grand fleuve et il a eu soin de s'établir sur ses bords. . . .

Voulez-vous jeter un coup d'œil sous ce toit dont

l'aspect extérieur est si riant ? Je vais essayer de vous en peindre le tableau, tel que je l'ai vu maintes fois.

D'abord, en entrant, dans le *tambour*, deux sceaux pleins d'eau fraîche sur un banc de bois et une tasse de ferblanc accrochée à la cloison, vous invitent à vous désaltérer. A l'intérieur, pendant que la soupe bout sur le poêle, la mère de famille, assise près de la fenêtre, dans une chaise berceuse, file tranquillement son rouet. Un mantelet d'indienne, un jupon bleu d'étoffe du pays et une *caline* blanche sur la tête, c'est là toute sa toilette.

Le petit dernier dort à ses côtés dans son *ber*. De temps en temps, elle jette un regard réjoui sur sa figure fraîche qui, comme une rose épanouie, sort du couvre-pied d'indienne de diverses couleurs, dont les morceaux taillés en petits triangles sont ingénieusement distribués.

Dans un coin de la chambre, l'aînée des filles, assise sur un coffre, *travaille au métier* en fredonnant une chanson. Forte et agile, la navette vole entre ses mains ; aussi fait-elle bravement dans sa journée sept ou huit aunes de *toile du pays* à grande largeur, qu'elle emploiera plus tard à faire des vêtements pour l'année qui vient.

Dans l'autre coin, à la tête du grand lit à courte-pointe blanche et à carreaux bleus, est suspendue une croix entourée de quelques images. Cette petite branche de sapin flétrie qui couronne la croix, c'est le rameau bénit.

Deux ou trois marmots nu-pieds sur le plancher s'amuse à atteler un petit chien. Le père, accroupi près du poêle, allume gravement sa pipe avec un tison ardent qu'il assujettit avec son ongle. Bonnet de laine rouge, gilet et culottes d'étoffe grise, bottes sauvages, tel est son accoutrement. Après chaque repas, il faut bien fumer une *touche* avant d'aller faire le *train* ou battre la grange.

L'air de propreté et de confort qui règne dans la maison, le gazouillement des enfants, les chants de la jeune fille qui se mêlent au bruit du rouet, l'apparence de santé et de bonheur qui reluit sur les visages, tout, en un mot, fait naître dans l'âme le calme et la sérénité.

After these distinguished authors, who created and developed the writing of history in French Canada, we need recall only three writers—of much less power, however—who left useful works : Louis-Philippe Turcotte (1842-78), author of *Canada sous l'Union* ; Théophile-Pierre Bédard

(1844-1900), author of *L'Histoire de Cinquante Ans*, and Joseph Royal (1837-1902), author of a *Histoire du Canada* (1841-67), which deals with the régime of the Union.

The field of history is still that which is most cultivated by French-Canadian writers of to-day. Among these may be mentioned — Benjamin Sulte, who, in addition to his *Histoire des Canadiens Français*, wrote many articles and studies which have been collected in volume form; Joseph-Edmond Roy, author of the *Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauson*; the Abbé Auguste Gosselin, the historian of the church in Canada (*L'Eglise du Canada*); Alfred De Celles, the elegant monographist who wrote on Papineau, La Fontaine and Cartier; Thomas Chapais, the author of *Jean Talon* and the *Marquis de Montcalm*; N. E. Dionne, who gave an account of our colonial origins; Louis Olivier David, author of *L'Union des Deux Canadas* (1841-67) and the *Histoire du Canada sous la Confédération* (1867-87); the Abbé Amédée Gosselin, the erudite archivist of Laval University, who rewrote the history of *L'Instruction au Canada sous le Régime Français*; and Pascal Poirier, the historian of Acadia. Among the very numerous French-Canadian workers engaged in rewriting, correcting and continuing the history of their country these are distinguished from their fellows by a ripper learning and a more perfect art.

POETRY

In French Canada poetry was the daughter of history. It is true that, during the period of literary origins, poetry sang freely of all subjects, but it sang, for the most part, without either inspiration or craftsmanship. About 1840, however, it essayed to do better and to take a loftier flight. It was the breath of history that inspired its voice and sustained its wing. The work of François Xavier Garneau long supplied the verses of the poet-patriots with themes. It evoked before their eyes the image of a country which had never before appeared so great, heroic and beautiful — a country whose many wounds still bled. They set themselves to extol 'that glorious world in which our fathers

dwelt.' Garneau himself was naturally the first to be fascinated by the spectacle of the heroic deeds of his ancestors, and he wrote some of the first pieces in the repertory of 1840.

Another influence, however, was about to modify profoundly French-Canadian poetry—the influence of the romantic school. The intellectual relations of Canada with France had long been maintained with difficulty; they suffered from the mere distance of the motherland, and from the political and social severance of New France from Old France. Thus the literary revolutions that agitated the mind of France were long in making themselves felt in Canada. About the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Octave Crémazie, the poet-bookseller, exerted himself to make the newer works of French poetry known in Quebec. He himself had felt the influence of his eager reading, and he was the first to tune his song to the note of romantic lyricism. Crémazie may justly be called the father of French-Canadian poetry.

Crémazie was born at Quebec on April 16, 1827. After completing his education at the Seminary of Quebec, he became associated with his two brothers, Jacques and Joseph, in their bookselling business. Anxious to instruct himself, and gifted with a fine imagination and keen sensitiveness, Crémazie loved to devote his leisure to reading his favourite authors, particularly the French poets whose works were in his bookshop. He was fond of inviting friends to talk literature in the back shop; among these were the Abbé Raymond Casgrain, Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, Hubert Larue and Joseph Charles Taché.

About 1854 Crémazie published his first poems in *Le Journal de Québec*. These thrilling utterances of his soul stirred to their depths the hearts of his countrymen. Men felt them to be inspired by the profound emotion of a poet who loved Canada and France above everything. Unhappily, reverses of fortune, in which Crémazie found himself gravely compromised, obliged him to fly from the justice of his country into exile. In 1862 he took refuge in France. He lived there, poor and alone, under the name of Jules

Fontaine, and died at Havre in 1879. During his exile he published no more poetry. He often confided to his friends that he had hundreds of poems in his mind, but he would not give them to the world. The only literary work remaining from these hard years, spent far from his native land, consists of a few letters to friends on questions of Canadian literature, some letters to his mother and brothers, and the detailed narrative, written from day to day, of the siege of Paris. This record is a journal which Crémazie used to write up every evening for his family, and in which he noted down such minor incidents, interesting gossip and fugitive impressions as do not usually figure in serious history.

In Crémazie's letters, and in his *Journal du Siège de Paris*, the whole heart and soul of the writer was disclosed. His letters give evidence of an alert and versatile mind, by turns serious and humorous, playful and sarcastic; capable of prompt and just judgments, but also of ideas that can with difficulty be accepted. His theories as to the impossibility of creating a Canadian literature, most disputable in principle, have been falsified by facts. In this long correspondence Crémazie displays all the delicate, wounded sensibility of his nature.

It was by the poems collected by his friends in book form that Crémazie was chiefly known, and it is these that still secure him so much lasting sympathy. Not that this poetry is really of a high quality, or that it constitutes a considerable achievement. Crémazie left scarcely more than twenty-five pieces, and one unfinished poem, *La Promenade des Trois Morts*. Into these two hundred pages of verse, however, he infused a generous, patriotic and Christian inspiration that moved Canadian readers. He was able to express so many of the things with which the heart of the people then overflowed, and which were the favourite subjects of popular thought; and for this he was awarded the warmest and most sincere admiration.

In *Castelfidardo* Crémazie sings of the papacy menaced by the Piedmontese and defended by the heroic zouaves; in the *Chant du Vieux Soldat canadien* and *Le Carillon* he celebrates the glorious memories of the history of New

France; in the *Chant des Voyageurs* he recalls certain familiar features of Canadian life; in *La Fiancée du Marin* he relates, in the manner of Hugo's ballades, a legend of the country. Because, for the first time in the history of Canadian poetry, readers found in these verses of Crémazie something of themselves so fully expressed, they applauded the poet, and his name and his verse were soon on every lip.

Crémazie's work has one rare merit. This is the sincerity of inspiration, and the profound feeling that imbues his patriotic songs. But Crémazie suffers in that he came too soon—at a time, that is to say, when he had himself to discipline his talent and learn to fashion his verses without any master. It was very difficult for the poets of 1850 to perfect their art: they were sadly lacking in the implements necessary to enable them to excel. Crémazie was obliged to pick up the lessons he needed casually in the course of his reading. To this cause are attributable his sometimes rather naïve imitations of the masters of French poetry—for example, of Victor Hugo in his *Orientales*.

Crémazie, moreover, did not sufficiently concern himself with correcting his work and lightening its heaviness. He cared nothing about being an artist. He first composed his poems in his memory; thence he let them drop on paper without altering their often commonplace matter, and without recasting their somewhat ponderous construction. *La Promenade des Trois Morts*, which he left unfinished, is a varied medley of delicate, moving lyricism and of realistic tales which are at times gruesome.

It is noteworthy that Crémazie did not pause to sing of love and the ardour of passion. His lyricism excluded this favourite theme of Lamartine and Musset, and devoted itself to the expression of religious and patriotic sentiments. This lyricism, with its twofold object, religion and patriotism, fascinated Crémazie's young contemporaries, and was continued in some of their works. Most of the poets of this period and the following years were disciples of the author of the *Chant du Vieux Soldat canadien*. They form what may be termed the patriotic school of Quebec.

The first of Crémazie's disciples was Louis Fréchette,

born at Lévis on November 16, 1839. He was a student at Quebec when Crémazie was issuing his first poems and gathering the studios of 1860 into his coterie of the Rue de la Fabrique. Fréchette did not attend these meetings in the back shop; but he read the poet's verses, he felt the enthusiasm which they excited in the readers of Quebec, and when he was twenty he began to write poetry himself. In 1863 he published his first collection of poems, *Mes Loisirs*. He soon became immersed in politics, a sphere in which he never succeeded. Often disillusioned and embittered by the struggle for life, Fréchette, then a voluntary exile in Chicago, published from 1866 to 1869 the *Voix d'un Exilé*. He returned to Canada, and having at length abandoned political life, after being a member of parliament at Ottawa for a few years, he devoted himself almost entirely to literary work, and published successively—*Pêle-Mêle* (1877); *Fleurs boréales* and *Oiseaux de Neige* (1879); *La Légende d'un Peuple* (1887); and *Feuilles volantes* (1891). Before his death he prepared a final edition of his poems. Under the title of *Épaves poétiques* he introduced, in addition to the finest poems that had already appeared in *Mes Loisirs*, *Pêle-Mêle* and *Fleurs boréales*, a few unpublished pieces and his great pathetic drama, *Veronica*.

In prose Fréchette published *Originaux et Détraqués* (1892), in which he delineated certain popular types, though sometimes with a little exaggeration; and his *Noël au Canada* (1900), in which he depicts in simple fashion the believing, faithful soul of the French-Canadian people. After a fuller poetical career than that of any other Canadian poet, he died at Montreal on May 31, 1908.

Fréchette devoted himself chiefly to lyrical poetry. Feeling rather than thought animates his verse. His inspiration, more versatile than that of Crémazie, touched upon nearly all the usual lyrical themes. Fréchette, however, like Crémazie, scarcely ever concerned himself with the passion of love. Crémazie shunned it altogether; Fréchette skimmed with a light wing over such ardent subjects. The bearing of his muse never ceased to be irreproachable. The author of *Mes Loisirs*, *Pêle-Mêle* and *Fleurs boréales* contents

himself with singing of the most delicate ties of friendship and the family, and of all the precious memories which we accumulate in our lives. He sings, too, in praise of nature and her varying expressions. Having studied in the school of the romantic poets dear to his youth, he loved, like them, the spring, flowers, trees, rivers and landscapes, and he sought to portray their colours, lines, depths and harmonies. At times he succeeded well in expressing many of the feelings awakened in us by contact with persons and things, and his verses entitled 'Sursum Corda' in *Ple-Mêle* and 'Renouveau' in *Fleurs boréales* are full of the most deep and delicate feeling. In these lyric poems of sentiment Fréchette diverges and differs from Crémazie; in his patriotic songs in *La Légende d'un Peuple* he approaches and resembles him. Like Crémazie, he was a patriotic poet. He shared with his master the readily accorded title of 'national poet.' In *La Légende d'un Peuple* he set himself to relate the epic of French Canada—to write in eloquent strophes the history of his race. From among the events of this history he chose those that seemed to him most representative of a moment or a period; he celebrates them one after another, without linking them sufficiently, and without sufficiently disclosing, by means of general and essential ideas, their powerful cohesion.

At the beginning of *La Légende d'un Peuple* Fréchette hails in eloquent strophes the America which its discoverers had revealed to the world:

Amérique!—salut à toi, beau sol natal!
Toi, la reine et l'orgueil du ciel occidental!
Toi qui, comme Vénus, montas du sein de l'onde,
Et du poids de ta conque équilibras le monde!

Quand, le front couronné de tes arbres géants,
Vierge, tu secouais au bord des océans
Ton voile aux plis baignés de lueurs éclatantes;
Quand, drapés dans leurs flots de lianes flottantes,
Tes grands bois, tout pleins d'oiseaux chanteurs,
Imprégnèrent les vents de leurs âcres senteurs;
Quand ton mouvant réseau d'aurores boréales
Révéla les splendeurs de tes nuits idéales;

Quand tes fleuves sans fin, quand tes sommets neigeux,
Tes tropiques brûlants, tes pôles orageux,
Eurent montré de loin leurs grandeurs infinies,
Niagaras grondants ! blondes Californies !
Amérique ! au contact de ta jeune beauté,
On sentit reverdir la vieille humanité !

All the poet's eloquence found vent in this collection ; along with strongly inspired couplets there are pages throughout which rhetoric lavishes its pompous and easy periods. Rhetorical language and structure too often weaken poetry : under their sway verse constantly becomes commonplace and bombastic, particularly when the poet's native land and its traditional glories are the theme. Great originality alone can triumph over these temptations to swell one's voice, in order to dazzle the reader with grandiloquent words and make him forget the emptiness of sonorous constructions. Fréchette was not always proof against these dangerous temptations, and his lyricism, although often sustained by powerful inspiration, also degenerates, here and there, into mere declamatory harangues. Moreover, he was ambitious to imitate Victor Hugo in his *Légende des Siècles*, and he exposed himself to the charge of copying Hugo's least pardonable faults. Nevertheless, to Fréchette must be ascribed the honour of perfecting the form of French-Canadian verse. More concerned about variety of rhythm and harmonious cadences than Crémazie, he produced a more carefully wrought and more artistic poetry. It was with justice that, about 1880, French Canadians acknowledged Fréchette to be their greatest poet.

By Fréchette's side, sometimes separated from him, but always related to him by common tastes and an equal if not a rarer talent, another poet, Pamphile Le May, lived and wrote. Born at Lotbinière in 1837, he was older than Fréchette by two years. He too received, from that epoch of literary effervescence in which he passed his youth, an influence and an impetus that were soon to make him follow in the footsteps of Crémazie. In 1865 he published his *Essais poétiques* ; in 1870 he translated, in verse, Longfellow's *Evangeline* ; in 1875 he produced *Les Vengeances*,

republished in 1888 under the title of *Tonkourou*, the Indian name of one of the chief personages of this romance in verse; in 1881 he published his *Fables canadiennes*, in 1883 *Petits Poèmes*, and in 1904 *Gouttelettes*. Le May still devotes his laborious old age to writing little comedies, poems that he will doubtless collect some day in volume form.

Le May was not so given to using the file as Fréchette, or, like him, careful to perfect as much as possible his poetical style. Yet he had, perhaps in a fuller measure, the ready inspiration, the vivid imagination, the profound sensibility, the *mens divinior*, that go to the making of true poets. He was also, like Fréchette, a national poet, yet in a different sense: he betook himself naturally, and with irrepressible spirit, to singing of the things that make Canadian life. Into the intimacy of that life he penetrated more deeply than Fréchette—into the details of the customs of the people, into all the picturesque manifestations of their rustic life. It was, indeed, to its charming pictures of country life that *Les Vengeances* owed its success; for, despite its rather hasty and careless workmanship, this poem derives value from its portrayal of Canadian customs.

It was Le May's wish to be the poet of the soil. He could not well be more 'regionalistic,' to adopt the French expression of to-day. Even while his art is being perfected he remains the friend of his country; he has not forsaken the source of his early inspiration. The best of his collected poems are the sonnets which he published under the title of *Gouttelettes*. These mark the truest progress in his career.

One of the finest poems in this collection is the sonnet in which Le May sings the return, the awakening of spring:

Laissons l'être mourir; courons à l'aventure.
Le brouillard qui s'élève est largement troué;
La fontaine reprend son murmure enjoué;
La clématite grimpe à chaque devanture.

Le ciel fait ondoyer les plis de sa tenture;
Une tiède vapeur monte du sol houé;
L'air doux est plein de bruits; les bois ont renoué,
Dans les effluves chauds, leur discrète ceinture.

L'aile galement s'envole à l'arbre où pend le nid ;
L'enfant rit ; le vieillard n'a plus de tons acerbes ;
Les insectes émus s'appellent sous les herbes.

O le joyeux réveil ! tout chante, aime, bénit !
Un élan pousse à Dieu la nature féconde,
Et le rire du ciel s'égrène sur le monde.

In these carefully wrought little pieces Le May has not confined himself to the artistic treatment of Canadian themes. There are biblical and evangelical sonnets ; there are poems that breathe of religion and of love ; but above all there are rustic sonnets, songs of the hearth and songs of history. The whole mind of the poet is found in this collection. Along with the poet of private life and domestic confidences we have the poet-patriot moved by the noblest inspirations of his race, and the Christian poet extolling that which is most dear to his faith and piety. Because Le May has thus expressed, often with charm and exquisite sweetness, so many things that fill the national consciousness with pride, he stands out as the most sympathetic poet of the school of 1860.

To this school belongs another poet who yields to no one in respect of the oratorical cast of his verse—William Chapman. He has published *Les Québécoises* (1876), *Feuilles d'Érable* (1890), *Aspirations* (1904) and *Les Rayons du Nord* (1910). These works do not resemble those of Crémazie, Fréchette and Le May, except in their patriotic and religious inspiration—that correct and austere sentiment which above all characterizes the whole Quebec school. Chapman's verse is also less sincere and more grandiloquent than that of his rivals. He is the poet-rhetorician *par excellence*, who does not shrink from oratorical displays, however threadbare. Yet, as with all who flutter their wings, Chapman at times takes flight, and soars and hovers, bearing with him the reader's admiration. He has written some very fine verse, stately in movement and proportion. What he lacks is a more constant inspiration, a more fully fledged thought, a less flagging and less wordy versification. He too often delights in enveloping his ideas in needless amplifica-

tion. *Aspirations* seems, so far, the culminating point of his work.

Adolphe Poisson and the Abbé Apollinaire Gingras, the former in *Heures perdues* (1894) and *Sous les Pins* (1902), the latter in the poems and songs entitled *Au foyer de mon Presbytère* (1881), gracefully carried on the traditions of the Crémazie school. Alfred Garneau and Nérée Beauchemin, although both were the precursors of a new art, may also be included among the poets of this group.

Alfred Garneau, son of the historian, was born at La Canardière, near Quebec, in 1836, and died at Montreal in 1904. He was hardly known as a poet during his lifetime; he published but little, keeping in his desk the poems that, after his death, were collected in a volume under the title of *Poésies*. He was at once sensitive, timid and artistic, and does not seem to have given out the full measure of his talent. Yet he was especially remarkable for an art more subtle than that of most of his contemporaries, for a more painstaking regard for form, and for a more refined delicacy of feeling.

Nérée Beauchemin, born at Yamachiche in 1851, possessed all the patriotism and piety of the Crémazie group. With these qualities he united a great regard for rhythm and harmony. His *Floraisons matutinales* (1879) contains some very beautiful pieces.

A new school, called 'L'École littéraire de Montréal,' was founded in that city in 1895. It gathered together a few active, enthusiastic spirits—for the most part poets—who sought to lead French-Canadian literature into new paths. The poets of this school, of which Alfred Garneau and Nérée Beauchemin may be regarded as the forerunners, are less circumscribed by patriotic and religious subjects than their predecessors. They may be said to have altogether abandoned these somewhat hackneyed themes, and to concern themselves mainly with the analysis of personal feeling, or the expression of the most diverse emotions of the human soul.

Emile Nelligan and Albert Lozeau are the two best known and most notable members of this group. Nelligan's poetry

comes feverishly from an imagination and sensibility that are often morbid. It is inspired too readily by the works of the French school of Verlaine, Beaudelaire, or Rollinat. It does not retain the measure and equilibrium indispensable to enduring work. Yet it contains accents of profound sincerity and of poignant sadness, which provoke the most ardent sympathy.

In the *Vaisseau d'or* Nelligan describes at the outset the tragic shipwreck of his spirit :

Ce fut un grand Vaisseau taillé dans l'or massif ;
Ses mâts touchaient l'azur, sur des mers inconnues ;
La Cyprine d'amour, cheveux épars, chairs nues,
S'étalait à sa proue au soleil excessif.

Mais il vint une nuit frapper le grand écueil
Dans l'Océan trompeur où chantait la Sirène,
Et le naufrage horrible inclina sa carène
Aux profondeurs du Gouffre, immuable cercueil.

Ce fut un Vaisseau d'or, dont les flancs diaphanes
Révélaient des trésors les marins profanes,
Le goût, Haine et Névrose, entre eux ont disputé.

Que reste-t-il de lui dans la tempête brève ?
Qu'est devenu mon cœur, navire déserté ?
Hélas ! Il a sombré dans l'abîme du Rêve !

Albert Lozeau is more personal than Nelligan ; he is less bookish, having formed himself by long and solitary meditations. He prefers to sing of what is external to him, although his songs are always the expression of the dream through which all things had to pass to reach his sick-room. His verses are also dictated by passion. Like external nature and the beauties of art, passion can assume in his lines a subtle accent, and sometimes a rather quaint form. In *L'Âme Solitaire* (1907) and also in his *Billets du soir* (1911), which resemble sonnets in prose, and in *Le Miroir des Jours* (1912), there are, however, the most delicate manifestations of a fine intellect.

In the following sonnet the poet thus describes the loneliness of his inward life :

Mon cœur est comme un grand paradis de délices
 Qu'un ange au glaive d'or contre le mal défend ;
 Et j'habite mon cœur, pareil à quelque enfant
 Chasseur de papillons, parmi les calices.

Gardé des chagrins fous et des mortels supplices ;
 En l'asile fleuri du jardin triomphant,
 Pour me désaltérer, dans le jour étouffant,
 J'ai ton eau, frais ruisseau du rêve bleu, qui glisses !

Je ne sortirai plus jamais du cher enclos
 Où, dans l'ombre paisible, avec les lys éclos,
 Par ses parfums secrets je respire la vie.

Car la nature a mis en moi l'essentiel
 Des plaisirs que je puis goûter et que j'envie :
 C'est en moi que je sens mon bonheur et mon ciel.¹

Each year sees an increase in the disciples of the École littéraire de Montréal. They seem to be held together by no common doctrine: each develops in the direction of his personal aptitudes. Charles Gill, Albert Ferland and Paul Morin are among those most appreciated by readers. Paul Morin, who published *Le Paon d'Email* (1912), gives more care to the form of his verse than other Canadian poets. He aims chiefly at producing sonorous lines in which the varied rhythm and rich rhymes charm the ear. From Greek and pagan antiquity he gathers much of his inspiration. He draws landscapes with a glowing pen. There is in his poems more colour than ideas. But his first collection of verse promises a still finer art. Let us hope that ideas may add to his muse the force necessary for true greatness.

FICTION

The novel appeared rather late in the history of French-Canadian literature. This branch of letters, which demands a well-disciplined imagination, a profound knowledge of life, and a most skilful art, suffered from the hard conditions that long affected the development of literature in French Canada. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that

¹ *Le Miroir des Jours: Le ciel intérieur*, p. 196.

any one ventured to enter a field in which such rare qualities of mind are necessary for success.

The novel of Canadian life and the historical novel were the first to be cultivated. Works of great merit are not very numerous. In 1853 Pierre Joseph Olivier Chauveau published *Charles Guérin*, which was merely a timid attempt at a novel of manners. Ten years later, in 1863, a work appeared that was to take a permanent place in the history of the Canadian novel—*Les Anciens Canadiens*, by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé.

Born in 1786 at Quebec, de Gaspé, a son of the seigneur of Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, did not enter Canadian literature until late in life. After a career at first mingled with trials, afterwards tranquil and happy at the seigneurial manor, he was suddenly seized with a great longing to communicate to his fellow-countrymen his earliest recollections. It was then 1860, and de Gaspé was in his seventy-fourth year. The literary movement instituted by the intellectual activity of Crémazie, Garneau, Casgrain and Gérin-Lajoie had led to the establishment of *Les Soirées canadiennes*, on the first page of which was inscribed the saying of Charles Nodier: 'Let us hasten to relate the delightful tales of the people before they have forgotten them.' The septuagenarian took Nodier's counsel to himself, and began to write his romance.

Les Anciens Canadiens is at once a novel of manners and an historical novel. As a basis for his narrative the author has used some of the most interesting features of Canadian life. Two young men, one of whom, Jules d'Haberville, is a Canadian, and the other, Archibald Cameron of Lochiel, a Scotsman, become friends during college life. Separated by the necessity of earning their livelihood, they again come together, but under different flags, during the war in which France and England fought for the last time for the soil of Canada on the Plains of Abraham and the fields of Ste Foy. Their old friendship is broken, then resumed with reserve. The author turns to account all the incidents that he gathers about this main theme in relating the life led by his countrymen at the already distant period of the Conquest.

De Gaspé's work is less a novel than a series of historical pictures; it is, as it were, the first draught—the rough

sketch—of a national epic. May not the novel be a veritable epic, and may not the epic, in its turn, be history?

Les Anciens Canadiens, moreover, was a species of *chanson de geste* in prose. De Gaspé blended history with legend; he related the heroic actions of the last battles of the Conquest, and their no less poignant dramas of conscience. He introduced the marvellous, without which there is no epic; he evoked a love-interest, too prudent, perhaps, to satisfy the canons of romance, but capable of recalling the mingled smiles and tears that pervade the *Iliad*, or the passion, ardent yet restrained, that breaks forth only to die at the end of the *Song of Roland*. Thus de Gaspé is at once the most eloquent, the most simple, the most charming narrator of Canada's past—the true epic singer of a marvellous phase of its history.

The life of the seigneurs, interwoven with that of the colonists, is described at length in de Gaspé's pages. The artless simplicity of popular manners is painted with truth. If Père José, as a type of the good old domestic, is a little exaggerated, M. d'Haberville and his son Jules are worthy representations of the seigneur of the old French régime. The scenes of the disaster of Saint Thomas, and the may-pole dancing at Saint-Jean-Port-Joli; the tales of José, the evocation of the sorcerers of the Isle d'Orléans, and the nocturnal promenades of La Corriveau; the description of the costumes of the peasants, and the conversations, animated and true to the characters and their time—all reconstruct before the reader's eyes the life of a period whose traditions are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. De Gaspé even shows himself a philosopher: he depicts life and he depicts himself, for in describing the trials endured by the worthy seigneur of the story, d'Egmont, he evidently draws on his personal experience. The style of this novel, unique in French-Canadian literature, breathes simplicity and good-humour. At times there are eloquent passages into which all the author's patriotism is infused. Sometimes these hastily written pages are adorned with classical reminiscences which testify to the writer's culture.

Very different from *Les Anciens Canadiens* is the *Jean*

Rivard of Antoine Gérin-Lajoie. This novel, while containing studies of Canadian manners, is also a social romance—a novel with a purpose. The author published the first part of the book in *Les Soirées canadiennes* in 1862, while de Gaspé was preparing *Les Anciens Canadiens*. He entitled it *Jean Rivard : le défricheur*; the second part, *Jean Rivard, économiste*, appeared in *Le Foyer canadien* in 1864. Gérin-Lajoie endeavoured in these successive works to persuade his compatriots to remain on their native soil of Canada instead of emigrating to the United States, as they were then largely doing; to cultivate the rich soil of the Province of Quebec; to clear the virgin forest without ceasing; to open up new parishes—in a word, to colonize.

Upon this very real theme of colonization Gérin-Lajoie built up the simplest of romances. As little intrigue and as much agricultural life as possible—such was the rule that this somewhat unromantic novelist imposed upon himself. This did not prevent him from writing a book that was widely read, and creating a type that has remained as an example for all colonists.

Jean Rivard is a young student, prevented by ill-fortune from finishing his classical studies. He passes, willingly enough, from his rhetoric into the forest, where he intends to cut himself out a domain. He becomes a pioneer tiller of the soil. Alone in the woods of Bristol, the forerunner of all his future companions and fellow-citizens, he fells the great trees, clearing them away by dint of the most patient efforts; he sows his roughly cleared field and builds himself a modest house in the virgin forest—a nest, soon to be brightened by the coming of Louise. The hard-working colonist becomes a rich and contented cultivator. Round about him other young men gather—men who have attacked the great trees with equal ardour. Rivardville is founded. Jean Rivard, who manages his farm with wisdom, is now an able economist after having been an indefatigable farmer. He offers the benefit of his practical experience to whoever will use it. He becomes the leading citizen of the newly colonized region, then the mayor of his village, and finally member of parliament for his county.

In this novel one must not look for profound psychology or an art practised in narrative. What the author wished chiefly to portray were pictures of colonization, scenes in which there passed before the vision, successively and realistically, the laborious stages, sometimes hard but on the whole happy, of the Canadian colonist's life. The tale is told in a simple style—a little dull, perhaps, but always interesting; it is enlivened, too, with most picturesque pages in which are clearly reproduced some of the most characteristic customs of the French-Canadian habitant's life.

Here, for example, is how Gérin-Lajoie draws the picturesque scene of the *corvée*:

Quand les matériaux furent prêts et qu'il ne fut plus question que de lever, Jean Rivard résolut, suivant la coutume canadienne, d'appeler une *corvée*. . . .

Dans les paroisses canadiennes, lorsqu'un *habitant* veut lever une maison, une grange, un bâtiment quelconque exigeant l'emploi d'un grand nombre de bras, il invite ses voisins à lui donner un coup de main. C'est un travail gratuit, mais qui s'accomplit toujours avec plaisir. . . . Ces réunions de voisins sont toujours amusantes; les paroles, les cris, les chants, tout respire la gaieté. Dans ces occasions, les tables sont chargées de mets solides, et avant l'institution de la tempérance le rhum de la Jamaïque n'y faisait pas défaut.

Une fois l'œuvre accomplie, on plante sur le faite de l'édifice, ce qu'on appelle le 'bouquet,' c'est-à-dire quelques branches d'arbres, dans la direction desquelles les jeunes gens s'amuse à faire des décharges de mousqueterie.

Quoique Jean Rivard n'eut invité, pour l'aider à lever sa maison, que les hommes de la famille Landry et quelques autres de plus proches voisins, il vit, le lundi matin, arriver avec eux plus de trente colons établis de distance en distance à quelques milles de son habitation. . . .

Chacun avait apporté avec soi sa hache et ses outils, et l'on se mit de suite à l'œuvre. Le bruit de l'égoïne et de la scie, les coups de la hache et du marteau, les cris et les chants des travailleurs, tout se faisait entendre en même temps; l'écho de la forêt n'avait pas un instant de répit. . . .¹

¹ Jean Rivard, I. 180-2.

While de Gaspé and Gérin-Lajoie were issuing their works, Georges Boucher of Boucherville (1814-98) published in *La Revue canadienne* another novel, which quickly attracted the attention of readers, *Une de perdus et Deux de trouvés* (1864-65). This was a novel of manners and adventure, and was very successful. The author transports his personages by turns to South America, Louisiana, the Antilles, and finally to Canada. His pictures and descriptions, especially in the first part of the book, are bright and animated. The extravagant and exciting situations that occur in the course of the tale contributed greatly to its popularity.

Joseph Marmette (1844-95), who was a most prolific novelist, devoted himself specially to the historical novel. His principal works were—*Charles et Eva* (1867), *François de Bienville* (1870), *L'Intendant Bigot* (1872), *Le Chevalier de Mornac* (1873), and *Le Tomahawk et l'Épée* (1877).

Marmette's historical studies are generally fascinating; they recreate dramatic periods of the past. In *François de Bienville* he depicts the siege of Quebec by Phips; in *L'Intendant Bigot*, the last years of the French régime. The author had a lively descriptive imagination, not, however, always under control; and his characters are lacking in originality.

The historical novel has had other representatives. In 1866 Napoléon Bourassa published *Jacques et Marie*, which recalls the dramatic story of the dispersion of the Acadians; 'Laure Conan' (Mlle Félicité Angers) wrote *A l'Œuvre et à l'épreuve* (1891) and *L'Oublié* (1902); and in 1909 Sir Adolphe Basile Routhier produced *Le Centurion*, an interesting attempt to reconstruct Jewish and Roman history in the time of our Lord.

Following the example of Gérin-Lajoie, Jules Paul Tardivel (1851-1905) attempted another novel with a purpose. His *Pour la Patrie*, published in 1895, is a work treating of religious thought; in it the author specially attacks the influence of freemasonry, which he denounces as the most dangerous and most subtle evil that can invade the national life of French Canada. Ernest Choquette, who

published *Les Ribaud* (1898) and *Claude Payson* (1899), and Hector Bernier, who wrote *Au large de l'Écueil* (1912), have given us pleasing romances of manners.

French Canadians still await writers in the field of fiction who will endow their literature with powerful and original works.

POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL LITERATURE

Jules Paul Tardivel belongs to political rather than to imaginative literature. His novel, *Pour la Patrie*, was written chiefly for the purpose of gathering together and systematizing his political and religious ideas. Tardivel was before everything a journalist, and it was in *La Vérité*, the paper which he founded at Quebec in 1881, that he waged his ceaseless combats. He stood apart from political parties, and his one aim was to make the legal principles of the Catholic Church triumph in the conduct of public affairs. He was the irreconcilable enemy of liberalism and freemasonry, and in the three volumes of *Mélanges*, which contain his best articles, one may see his firm and uncompromising cast of thought.

Journalism has from time to time given us writers whose pens were both ready and fertile. The names of Joseph Charles Taché, Joseph Edouard Cauchon and Hector Fabre are well known in the history of French-Canadian journalism. Thomas Chapais, who abandoned journalism for history, collected in a volume of *Mélanges* a number of vigorously written articles, which possess interest in connection with the political history of the last years of the nineteenth century. Those who are incontestably the masters of French-Canadian journalism to-day, who instil most ideas into their writing, and give those ideas the most artistic form, are Henri Bourassa, managing director of *Le Devoir*, Omer Héroux, editor of the same journal, and the Abbé J. A. Damours, editor-in-chief of *L'Action Sociale*. These three journalists are true literary men, whose work undoubtedly bears the mark of high literary culture.

By the side of these journalists may be placed the orators.

Journalists and orators frequently meet in discussing the same ideas; frequently, too, they make use of the same style. The political eloquence of French Canada, however, has nothing of a very high literary value to show. Among those who have disappeared, Honoré Mercier and Adolphe Chapleau were orators who were favourites of the populace, but whose eloquence was by no means uniform. To-day the eloquence that has often thrilled the hearers of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Thomas Chapais is found with greater intensity and vigour, and incontestably with greater art, in the speeches of Henri Bourassa.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at Paris, in 1907, defined in the following manner the loyalty of the French Canadian:

Séparés de la France, nous avons toujours suivi sa carrière avec un intérêt passionné, prenant notre part de ses gloires, de ses triomphes, de ses joies, et de ses deuils, de ses deuils surtout. Hélas ! Jamais nous ne sommes peut-être à quel point elle nous était chère que le jour où elle fut malheureuse. Oui, ce jour-là, si vous avez souffert, j'ose le dire, nous avons souffert autant que vous. . . .

J'aime la France qui nous a donné la vie, j'aime l'Angleterre qui nous a donné la liberté ; mais la première place dans mon cœur est pour le Canada, ma patrie, ma terre natale. . . . Vous en conviendrez avec moi, le sentiment national d'un pays n'a de valeur que par l'orgueil qu'il sait inspirer à ses enfants. Eh bien ! nous l'avons, nous, Canadiens, cet orgueil de notre pays. . . .

The Hon. Thomas Chapais, in 1902, on the day of the national festival of the French Canadians, reminded his compatriots of the reasons that bound them more than all the other races to Canadian soil :

Mais où sont donc les citoyens du Canada qui sont plus canadiens que nous ? Nous sommes attachés au sol de la patrie par toutes les fibres de notre cœur. Dieu merci, notre nationalité n'est pas ici un arbre sans racine. Pour plusieurs de nos détracteurs, le Canada n'est qu'un pays de passage et d'attente ; pour nous, il est la terre des aïeux, la terre de toutes nos tendresses, de toutes nos espérances. La plupart de nos concitoyens d'origine

étrangère à la nôtre ne volent dans le Canada qu'une patrie vieille de cinquante ans, de soixante ans, de cent ans à peine. Pour nous, c'est une patrie vieille de trois siècles. Dans nos vieux cimetières, à l'ombre de la croix plantée sur les rives canadiennes par Jacques Cartier, il y a plus de quatre cents ans, dorment six générations d'ancêtres. . . . Parcourez toutes les provinces de la Confédération : partout vous retrouverez la trace de nos héros et de nos apôtres qui ont jeté en terre, avec leur poussière et leur sang, une semence de civilisation chrétienne. Ah ! oui, nous sommes les plus Canadiens des Canadiens.

Henri Bourassa has peculiarly devoted himself to defending the rights of the French-Canadian minority in the Confederation. At the Monument National in Montreal on May 9, 1912, he thus expresses himself with regard to secular legislation in the North-West :

Jusqu'aujourd'hui la Province de Québec a été le pivot de la Confédération. Jusqu'aujourd'hui les Canadiens français ont été le rempart infranchissable contre toute idée d'annexion aux États-Unis, contre tout projet de séparation de la Grande-Bretagne. Ne pensez-vous pas que cent cinquante ans de loyauté leur méritent un droit d'égalité politique dans toute l'étendue de cette confédération ? Ne pensez-vous pas que les colons que nous pourrions envoyer sur les bords de la Saskatchewan ou de la Rivière-Rouge, pour continuer l'œuvre des ancêtres, mériteraient d'y être aussi bien traités, que vos co-religionnaires [l'orateur s'adresse aux Anglais protestants] et vos concitoyens sont traités dans la Province de Québec ? Ne pensez-vous pas que des colonies françaises fortes et prospères, essaimant dans l'Ouest, préserveraient l'ouest canadien de la pénétration des idées américaines, comme la Province de Québec a sauvé le Canada, à trois ou quatre reprises, de l'annexion aux États-Unis ?

Britanniques, nous le sommes autant que n'importe quelle autre race du Canada ! Nous ne le sommes pas par le sang et par la langue, mais nous le sommes par la raison et par la tradition.

Les institutions britanniques, ce n'est pas la conquête qui les a faites nôtres, ou du moins ce n'est pas une seule

conquête. Il a y huit cents ans, des hommes qui parlaient notre langue et dont les veines renfermaient le même sang que celui qui coule dans les nôtres, sont allés en Angleterre allier leur génie à celui des Anglo-Saxons. De cette alliance anglo-normande sont sorties ces institutions magnifiques qui nous sont revenues ici sept cents ans plus tard.

A ces institutions personne n'est plus attaché que nous. Mais nous ne sommes pas des chiens rampants ; nous ne sommes pas des valets, et après cent-cinquante ans de bons et loyaux services à des institutions que nous aimons, à une Couronne que nous avons appris à respecter, nous avons mérité mieux que d'être considérés comme les sauvages des anciennes réserves, et de nous faire dire : ' Restez dans Québec . . . vous y êtes chez vous ; mais ailleurs il faut que vous deveniez Anglais.'

Religious eloquence has been careless in preserving its records. Its utterances have often been powerful and full of feeling. The Abbé Holmes was one of the most admired pulpit orators on account of his *Conférences de Notre-Dame de Québec*. In our own day the sermons of Monseigneur Paul Eugène Roy, auxiliary Bishop of Quebec, display literary qualities of precision and grace of the highest order combined with the utmost dialectical power.

On September 29, 1908, addressing himself to French-Canadian farmers, sons of families who had occupied for at least two centuries the ancestral land, and to whom was restored the 'médaille des anciennes familles,' Mgr Roy expresses himself as follows :

Elle serait intéressante à raconter et à lire, messieurs, l'histoire de ces quelque deux cents familles, dont vous êtes ici les authentiques et heureux descendants ! S'ils avaient eu le temps et la facilité d'écrire leurs mémoires, ces braves aïeux ! Si leurs mains avaient su manier la plume comme elles savaient manier la hache et la charrue, quelles précieuses archives ils auraient laissées aux historiens de notre temps !

D'ailleurs, messieurs, la terre qu'ils vous ont transmise, après l'avoir fécondée de leurs sueurs, n'est-elle pas le plus beau livre d'histoire que vos mains puissent feuilleter et vos yeux parcourir ? Et ce livre, n'est-il pas

vrai que vous le lisez avec amour ? que vous le savez par cœur ?

La préface en fut écrite par ce vaillant chef de dynastie qui apporta ici, il y a plus de deux siècles, votre nom, votre fortune et votre sang. C'était un Breton, un Normand, un Saintongeais, que sais-je ? un Français, en tout cas, et un brave, à coup sûr. Avec cet homme et la femme forte qui vint avec lui ou qu'il trouva sur ces bords, une famille nouvelle venait fortifier la colonie naissante, civiliser le royaume de Québec, et enrichir, d'un sang généreux et de belles vertus, la noble race canadienne-française.

Et l'histoire commence, palpitante d'intérêt, débordante de vie. Que de fois vous les avez vus repasser dans votre imagination, ces premiers chapitres, écrits au fil de la hache, illuminés par les belles flambées d'abatis ? et gardant encore aujourd'hui les âcres et fortifiantes senteurs des terres-neuves, que déchirent la pioche et la herse, et où germent les premières moissons ! Ce sont les années rudes, mais combien fructueuses des premiers défricheurs ; c'est la glorieuse épopée de la terre qui naît, de la civilisation qui trace pied à pied son lumineux sillon à travers l'inculte sauvagerie des hommes et des bois. Chaque coup de hache, alors, est une belle et patriotique action ; chaque arbre qui tombe est un ennemi vaincu ; chaque sueur qui arrose le sol est une semence.

Monseigneur Louis Adolphe Paquet and Father Louis Lalande have also delivered sermons and lectures that, in their ample and harmonious phraseology, bear the impress of true eloquence.

While some writers and orators propagated their ideas by means of journalism or speeches, and examined the religious and social questions of the day, others published books treating of the same subjects and reviewing the same problems. Philosophical and social literature has not yet many representatives ; but there are a few writers who occupy a leading place in these fields.

Edmond de Nevers, who was born at La Baie-du-Février in 1862, and died at Central Falls, in the United States, in 1906, published *L'Avenir du Peuple canadien-français* in

1896 and *L'Âme américaine* (2 vols.) in 1900. These two works, which show a wide acquaintance with original documents and are filled with critical observations, have placed Edmond de Nevers in the first rank of Canadian writers. In *L'Âme américaine* the author seeks to analyse the multifarious and dissimilar elements composing the American mind. He examines in turn the origins, the historical life, the immigration movements, and the development of the United States. While there is occasionally a little confusion in the plan, it must be acknowledged that the abundance of information, the ingenuity of the views, and the lofty inspiration of the whole make it a work worthy of preservation.

Among present-day writers Monseigneur Paquet, of Laval University, Quebec, is certainly the most authoritative representative of social and philosophical literature. Prepared for his literary career by long theological study and by his *Commentaria* on Saint Thomas—highly esteemed in theological faculties—he wrote his studies on *Le Droit public de L'Église* with all the competence of a professional. In the first volume he dealt with the 'General Principles' (1908), in the second with 'The Church and Education' (1909), and in the third with 'The Religious Organization and Civil Government' (1912). These two works are methodically planned and ably executed; they are written in free but carefully chosen language, sometimes eloquent and always well-balanced.

Read, for example, this page where Mgr Paquet demonstrates the necessity of putting religious and moral training at the foundation of instruction:

Veut-on que l'homme mûr, battu par le flot du doute, blasé, succombant peut-être sous le poids moral qui l'accable, puisse un jour en se retournant vers le passé, puiser dans ses souvenirs d'enfance, dans ses impressions de jeunesse, dans le spectacle d'années heureuses et pieuses, un renouveau de foi, un regain d'ardeur virile et de courage pour le bien? Qu'on fasse luire, au seuil même de sa vie, le flambeau des doctrines religieuses; qu'on verse dans son âme encore neuve, comme une coulée de riche métal, les notions élevées, les suggestions salutaires, les persuasions moralisatrices par lesquelles

se forment les habitudes saines, se trempent les caractères généreux, se préparent les fières et triomphantes résistances aux assauts répétés de l'erreur et du mal. 'Le jeune homme, a dit l'Esprit Saint, suit sa voie; même lorsqu'il aura vieilli, il ne la quittera pas.' Cette voie peut être bonne ou mauvaise; il dépend beaucoup, il dépend principalement de l'éducateur et de ses leçons qu'elle soit une voie d'honneur, de probité et de justice.

La jeunesse est le printemps de la vie. Quand ce printemps donne toutes ses fleurs, il s'en exhale un parfum pénétrant de religion et de piété qui embaume toute l'existence humaine, qui fortifie dans le bien, console dans la douleur, prémunit l'âme inconstante et finale contre les enivrements du vice. Pour cela que faut-il? plonger l'enfant, l'adolescent, le jeune homme dans une atmosphère pleine de Dieu et des choses divines; purifier la sève qui court abondante dans ses veines; faire que toutes ses facultés s'ouvrent avidement à tout ce qui est bon, à tout ce qui est juste, à tout ce qui est noble. Saint Thomas cite comme un axiome cette sentence d'Aristote: 'Un vase garde toujours l'odeur de la première liqueur qu'il a contenue.' Le jeune chrétien qui, pendant des années, s'est nourri de la substance même de la foi; qui en a, par ses prières, par ses études, par tous ses actes, aspiré et absorbé les purs et spirituels éléments, garde, en effet, dans les plus intimes replis de son âme, même si son esprit se fausse, même si son cœur s'égare, un reste de bonté surnaturelle et de grandeur morale qui fera son salut.¹

MISCELLANEOUS

French literature, to whatever climate it be transplanted, must produce its *conteurs*, its *nouvellistes* and its *chroniqueurs*, who express in a light form, generally humorous but sometimes dramatic, caprices of the imagination or picturesque aspects of popular life. In this varied class of literature the French genius has always found a field for the display of its sparkling wit.

The tellers of short stories have not, perhaps, sufficiently worked the fruitful vein that lies ready for their purpose.

¹ *L'Église et l'Éducation*, pp. 162-3.

French Canada abounds in legends and tales worthy of literary preservation. In 1860 the Abbé Casgrain began the relation of his Canadian *Légendes*. His *Jongleuse* is still celebrated. Joseph Charles Taché (1821-94) continued this task, publishing *Trois Légendes de mon Pays* (1876) and *Forestiers et Voyageurs* (1884). In the latter the life of the woodmen with their merry evenings in camp is told in a style quaint and piquant—a true presentation of life in the shanties. P. J. O. Chauveau (1820-90) published in 1877 *Souvenirs et Légendes*. Pamphile Le May, who is an adept at discovering whatever poetry there is in the popular tale, published his *Contes vrais* in 1899, reissuing them in 1907.

Faucher de Saint Maurice (1844-97), a Gascon born near Quebec, took pleasure in relating the adventures of a life that he thought heroic. He was enamoured of military glory and longed to fight and travel. On leaving college at the age of twenty, he left Canada and placed his enthusiastic youth at the service of the Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. He published successively—*De Québec à Mexico* (1866), *A la brumante : contes et récits* (1873), *Choses et Autres* (1873), *De tribord à babord : trois croisières dans le golfe du Saint-Laurent* (1877), *A la veille* (1878), *Deux ans au Mexique* (1878), *En route : sept jours dans les provinces maritimes* (1888), *Joies et Tristesses de la Mer* (1888) and *Loin du Pays* (1889).

Doctor Hubert Larue (1833-81), who wrote much in the reviews and journals of his time, left us in the department of the tale and chronicle: *Voyage sentimental sur la rue Saint-Jean* (1879), *Voyage autour de l'Isle d'Orléans*, and two volumes of *Mélanges historiques, littéraires et d'économie politique* (1870 and 1881).

A portion of the work of Sir Adolphe Basile Routhier may be included in this class. *A travers l'Europe*, 2 vols. (1881 and 1883), *En Canot* (1881) *A travers l'Espagne* (1889), and *De Québec à Victoria* (1893) contain impressions of travel recorded in a rapid but instructive fashion. Routhier also set himself to describe and paint *Québec et Lévis* (1900).

Ernest Gagnon, who in 1865 produced a valuable treatise on the *Chansons populaires du Canada*, also published, in

1905, his *Choses d'Autrefois*, in which many interesting recollections are brought together. Out of history Ernest Myrand, in *Fête de Noël sous Jacques Cartier* (1888), fashioned an attractive order of literature, possessing something of the novel and something of the true narrative. His *Noëls anciens de la Nouvelle-France* (1899) is also an entertaining monograph.

In the newspapers many *chroniqueurs* have written fugitive sketches—short miscellaneous articles—in which the impressions of daily life were currently recorded. In Canada the undisputed master of the *chronique* was Arthur Buies, who was born at the Côte des Neiges, near Montreal, in 1840. While he was still very young his parents went to settle in British Guiana, and he was left to the care of two aunts. He led a strange and most eventful life. During his youth he lived by turns in Quebec and British Guiana; he then went, against his father's wish, to study in Paris; and in 1859, to the great scandal of his aunts, he became one of Garibaldi's soldiers. He returned to Canada the same year to study law, and was admitted to the bar in 1866. The advocate immediately rushed into journalism, and committed the gravest extravagances in thought and language. Inspired by the influence of French journalists hostile to the church, he delighted in attacking the Canadian clergy in his writings. This portion of Buies' work is now forgotten, and may be ignored. Later the *chroniqueur* continued, in various journals that welcomed his collaboration, to write short and sprightly miscellaneous articles, which remain models of their kind in French-Canadian literature. These articles have been collected in book-form—*Chroniques, Humeurs et Caprices* (1873); *Chroniques, Voyages* (1875); and *Petites Chroniques* for 1877 (1878).

On May 8, 1871, Buies began, in this half-jocular, half-serious tone, his chronicle, dated at Quebec:

Avez-vous jamais fait cette réflexion que, dans les pays montagneux, les hommes sont bien plus conservateurs, plus soumis aux traditions, plus difficiles à transformer que partout ailleurs? Les idées pénètrent difficilement dans les montagnes, et, quand elles y

arrivent, elles s'y arrêtent, s'enracinent, logent dans le creux des rochers, et se perpétuent jusqu'aux dernières générations sans subir le moindre mélange ni la moindre atteinte extérieure. Le vent des révolutions souffle au-dessus d'elles sans presque les effleurer, et lorsque le voyageur moderne s'arrête dans ces endroits qui échappent aux transformations sociales, il cherche, dans son étonnement, des causes politiques et morales, quand la simple explication s'offre à lui dans la situation géographique.

Si une bonne partie du Canada conserve encore les traditions et les mœurs du dernier siècle, c'est grâce aux Laurentides. La neige y est bien, il est vrai, pour quelque chose, la neige qui enveloppe dans son manteau tout ce qui respire, et endort dans un silence de six mois hommes, idées, mouvements et aspirations. À la vue de cette longue chaîne de montagnes qui borde le Saint Laurent tout d'un côté, qui arrête la colonisation à ses premiers pas et fait de la rive nord une bande de terre étroite, barbare, presque inaccessible, on ne s'étonne pas de ce que les quelques campagnes glacées qui s'y trouvent et dont on voit au loin les collines soulever péniblement leur froid linceul, n'aient aucun culte pour le progrès, ni aucune notion de ce qui le constitue. . . .

Je porte mes regards à l'est, à l'ouest, au sud, au nord ; partout un ciel bas, chargé de nuages, de vents, de brouillards, pèse sur les campagnes encore à moitié ensevelies sous la neige. Le souffle furieux du nord-est fait trembler les vitres, onduler les passants, frémir les arbres qui se courbent en sanglotant sous son terrible passage, frissonner la nature entière. Depuis trois semaines, cet horrible enfant du golfe, éclos des mugissements et les tempêtes de l'Atlantique, se précipite en rafales formidables, sans pouvoir l'ébranler, sur le roc où perche la citadelle, et soulève sur le fleuve une plaine d'écume bondissante. . . . 'Ce vent souffle pour faire monter la flotte,' disent les Québécois. Et, en effet, la flotte monte, monte, mais ne s'arrête pas, et nous passe devant le nez, cinglant à toutes voiles, vers Montréal.

Ainsi donc, Québec a le nord-est sans la flotte, Montréal a la flotte sans le nord-est ; lequel vaut mieux ? Mais si Québec n'a pas la flotte, en revanche il a les cancans, et cela dans toutes les saisons de l'année. Voilà

le vent qui souffle toujours ici. Oh ! les petites histoires, les petits scandales, les grosses bêtises, comme ça pleut ! Il n'est pas étonnant que Québec devienne de plus en plus un désert, les gens s'y mangent entre eux. Pauvre vieille capitale !¹

He also employed his talent for observation in descriptive geographical studies. In this department he has left—*L'Outaouais supérieur* (1889), *Le Saguenay et le Bassin du Lac Saint-Jean* (1896), *Récits de Voyages* (1890), *Les comtés de Rimouski, Matane et Témiscouata* (1890), *Au Portique des Laurentides* (1891), and *La Vallée de la Matapédia* (1895).

Buies died at Quebec in 1891. His name remains as that of a writer who well represented the Parisian spirit, ready-witted and facetious, censorious at times, but also capable of tenderness and subtle feeling. Buies particularly loved the French tongue. In Canada he wished to see it freed from the dangerous contributions of Anglicism. He wrote a pamphlet entitled *Anglicismes et Canadianismes* (1888), in which he indicated many new words deserving proscription. He is one of those who have most skilfully used the French language in Canada. His *chroniques* are composed of the impressions of each day, the reflections suggested by events, the judgments dictated by his wit and his sympathetic nature ; in them are mirrored all the spectacles of daily life, and they contain some of the finest pages in the literature of French Canada.

With less vivacity, but also with wit, Napoléon Legendre (1841-1907) and Hector Fabre (1834-1910) wrote newspaper *chroniques* on all the subjects of the day. The former collected some of his best articles in two volumes entitled *Échos de Québec* (1877), and the latter published under the title of *Chroniques* (1877) pages in which are to be found the light and entertaining qualities of his ready talent.

Alphonse Lusignan (1843-92), who, at the outset of his career, was responsible for some very fiery journalism, left a volume of *chroniques* entitled *Coups d'œil et coups de plume*, which was much relished by readers. Oscar Dunn (1845-85)

¹ *Chroniques canadiennes : Humours et Caprices*, I. pp. 11-12.

collected his reminiscences and his principal journalistic writings in *Dix ans de Journalisme* (1876) and *Lectures pour tous* (1878). The Abbé Camille Roy collected under the title *Propos canadiens* (1912) stories and studies dealing with Canadian life. These are in turn rustic, moral, patriotic, scholarly and literary in their tone and colour.

The *chronique* is also represented among us by two women, although their work is rather superficial: 'Françoise' (Mlle Robertine Barry), author of *Chroniques du lundi* (1891) and *Fleurs champêtres* (1895), and 'Madeleine' (Mrs Gleason-Huguenin), who in 1902 published her *Premier péché*.

Criticism was the last branch of literature to make its appearance, although in the *chronique* and newspaper article it had long been in evidence. P. J. O. Chauveau, whose mind was distinguished by delicacy and good taste, encouraged letters in his *Journal de l'Instruction publique*, and he himself published a literary monograph on *François Xavier Garneau, sa vie et ses œuvres* (1883). Edmond Lareau, in 1874, wrote a first *Histoire de la Littérature canadienne*, and Routhier wrote a study of *Les Grands Dramas* (1889). But these were only isolated efforts. Of recent years French-Canadian literature is developing most abundantly, and literary criticism watches over the productions of the writers more assiduously, and especially with more method. The Abbé Camille Roy was one of the first to make a speciality of this branch of study; he published in 1907 a first series of *Essais sur la Littérature canadienne*, and in 1909 the history of *Nos Origines littéraires*. Henri d'Arles (Father Henri Beaudé), who had already entered upon art criticism in *Propos d'art* (1903) and *Pastels* (1905), applied himself in turn to literary criticism in his *Essais et Conférences* (1910). The Abbé Emile Chartier also devoted a portion of his *Pages de Combat* (1911) to literary criticism. Finally, in the *Bulletin de la Société du Parler français au Canada*, Adjutor Rivard, the learned general secretary of the society, assigned the writers of French Canada their meed of praise or blame, mingled with the wise counsels of his own trained mind.

Such is French-Canadian literature, viewed as a whole and in the persons of some of its best representatives. Intellectual masterpieces, it is true, are rare. We cannot demand of literatures in their infancy such works as can be the glory of old literatures alone. Nevertheless, French-Canadian writers have produced, in almost every branch except the drama, works that do honour to the spirit that conceived them, and that may still be read with profit.

The literature that we have been describing is chiefly notable for its method and clearness, and for the enthusiasm for ideas and the delicacy of feeling that are qualities of the French mind. Sometimes a little heavy, it goes on unburdening itself, freeing itself from cumbersome forms, and perfecting itself in proportion as the writers and their readers are able to devote themselves more and more to intellectual culture.

French-Canadian literature is eminently moral. It bears the stamp of the Christian spirit in which its works are conceived. In it catholic thought is expressed without timidity—with that apostolic boldness which is its characteristic. Further, it generally draws its inspiration from the abundant springs of the national life. At times it has sought unduly to imitate the artistic forms of French thought; it has often been too ready to reproduce that which is most characteristic, and least capable of assimilation, in the literature of the ancient motherland. Yet it must be acknowledged that, taken as a whole, the literature is indeed Canadian, and that in it the life of the people is reflected and perpetuated. Many of its works, the best in prose and in verse, breathe the perfume of the soil, and are the expression—original, sincere and profound—of the Canadian spirit.

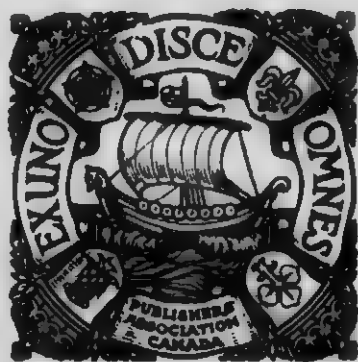
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CANADA AND ITS PROVINCES

A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN
PEOPLE AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS
BY ONE HUNDRED ASSOCIATES

ADAM SHORTT
ARTHUR G. DOUGLASS
GENERAL EDITORS
IN TWENTY-TWO VOLUMES
AND INDEX



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